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Number 54

December 1988

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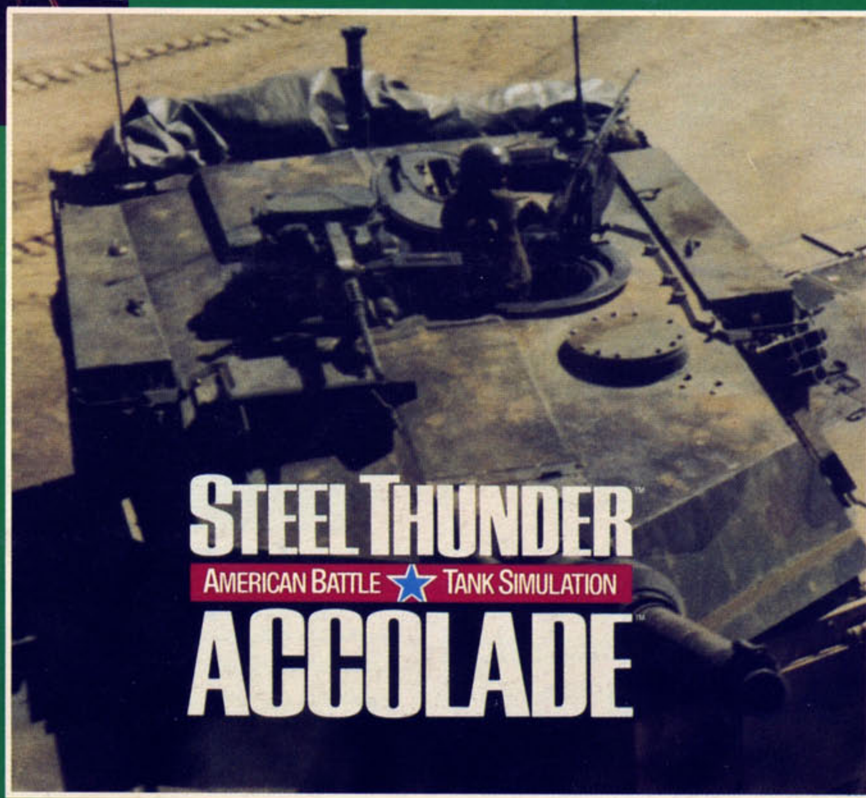


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Accolade's Steel Thunder

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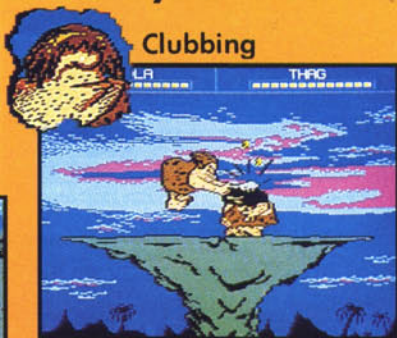
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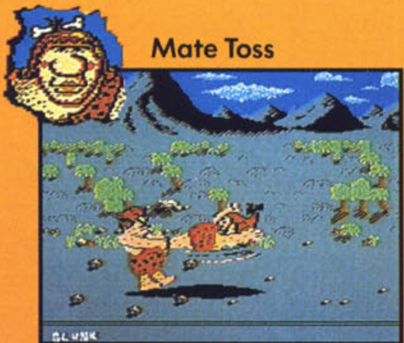
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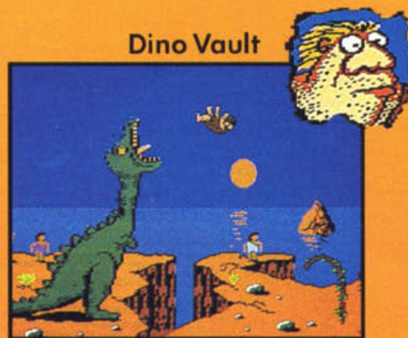
"Become one with club. Don't fall for look-at-birdie-in-sky trick. Don't check feet for fleas."
—Glunk.

Mate Toss



"Swing fast circles. Remember let go. Good for medals. Not good for getting dates."
—Crudla.

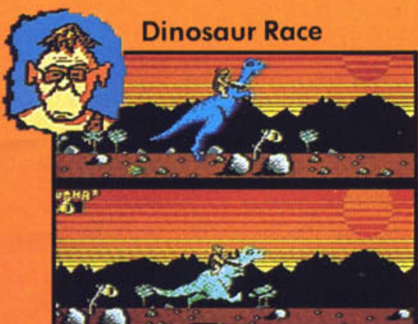
Dino Vault



"I like plant pole in totally cave-ular sand, soar high in air, wave to way-hungry dino."
—Thag.

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Dinosaur Race



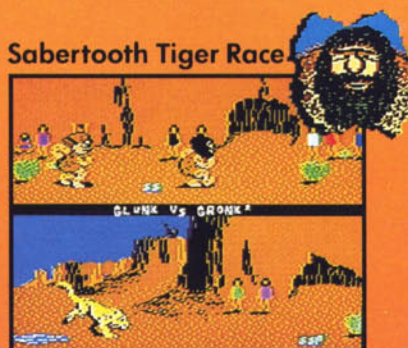
"Club dino head, go faster. Too much club, dino bite dust. Vincent hate dust."
—Vincent.

Firemaking

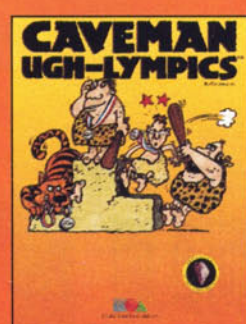


"Rub sticks fast. Make bright, ouchy, hot thing first. Try not get dizzy. Remember to duck."
—Ugha.

Sabertooth Tiger Race



"Run fast fast from tiger. Watch out for cactus. Trip other cave-guy. Him big lunch for kitty."
—Gronk.



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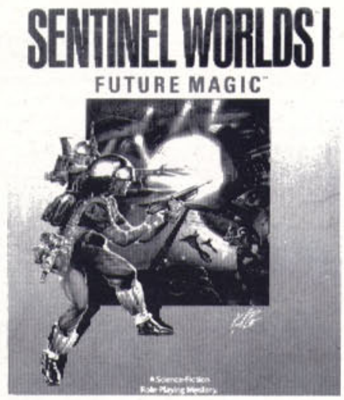
COMPUTER GAMING WORLD

Covering the World of Computer Games For Seven Years

December 1988 **Number 54**

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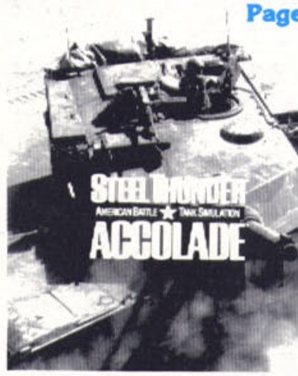


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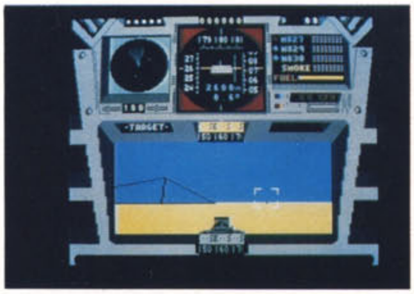
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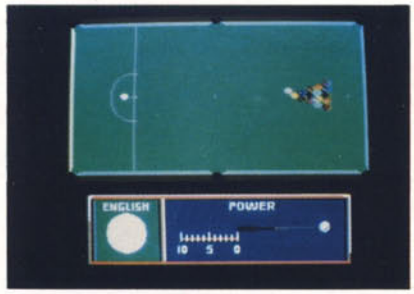
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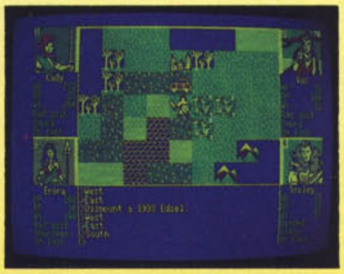
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(Continued on page 66)

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Stellar Rebuttal

As the designer of **SSI**'s *Stellar Crusade*, I would like to respond to recent criticisms of the game. I will begin with a bit of general gaming philosophy, then move on to address a few specific questions.



Norman Koger

This was my first attempt at a "professional" game program. Over the years, I have played many of the popular game programs available for home computers. Some of these games have been very good, but almost all have been "thin." Like many of my age (31), my introduction to the world of gaming was through the vehicle of board wargames. All of my personal favorites in that genre have rules documents which make the average person not familiar with those types of games recoil in horror. As one of my friends once put it, such games are "too much like work." I realize that not everyone out there in computer land has my taste for complete immersion in detail, but some of us (and apparently most of those who have reviewed the game) enjoy complexity.

If there is any major failing in *Stellar Crusade*, it may well be in the packaging and not in the rules. One reviewer has stated that "Stellar Crusade's complexity level demands a warning label . . . ." Perhaps this is true, in a way. But part of the problem here is that most of the games which in the past have been touted by sales/packaging people as being rich in detail have, in fact, been less than detailed in execution. This is to be expected from programs written for 64K machines, but we, as gamers, have become jaded by unfulfilled promises.

. . . .*[Stellar Crusade]* is as close to my idea of a "perfect" wargame as I could come to at the time. In effect, I created the game I had always wanted to play. The immersion in detail that I associate with the best of the board wargames is coming to the computer world.

In the August '88 issue of *CGW*, Stellar Crusade was reviewed by Hosea Battles. I have to admit that your reviewer's comments on the lack of documentation of the research function in the game were essentially correct. We should have caught this in our review of the rules manual. All copies of the game produced after the appearance of your review include an expanded README file on disk which describes research, as well as some additional documentation on other game functions. I am a bit confused about the comment in that same review that "[the manual] never clearly explains the economic principles of the game . . . ." The manual does state the basic operations of raw materials and industrial production. This is reinforced by prompts, cautions, and notes on the economic function screens. Players will find that assimilating and integrating all of this information will require that they become very involved in the game. Experimenting with different colonization and industrial strategies in an attempt to exploit the rather complicated "economic principles" of the game is part of the *fun* for those of us who like games that others feel are "too much like work." All of the information needed for this is, in fact, given in the manual and on the screen. For those who don't mind taking a bit of advice, the program gives concrete, dynamically calculated suggestions which will help in acquiring an understanding of the economic side of the game.

The original rules manual for the game was, in fact, much longer than that which was originally published. Some have suggested that the game would be much easier to learn using the original manual. This might *not* be the case. The primary difference between the original and published manuals was a rather tiresome list of menu trees and examples in the original. While it might have been useful in some ways, most of the information deleted from the final version of the manual is easily available on the screen. Twenty minutes of random fiddling with the menus will teach players all there is to know about them. If the information were not available on screen, it would have remained in the manual. The decision to shorten the manual was taken in order to avoid obscuring the basic principles of the game with masses of information on program mechanics. The program mechanics are well detailed within the program itself.

Finally, I would like to reassure those who have expressed concerns about my use of the term "aborigines" to describe the indigenous populations of some star systems. Please consult your dictionaries. I did. The term does not, in general, apply to any specific racial group. Within the context of the game, aboriginal populations are assumed to be exploited. This may not be the way we'd like things to be in the future, but history and current trends suggest that those without the strength to resist subjugation will continue to be exploited. Believable futures cannot exist in a historical vacuum. For what it's worth to the people who worry about my "racist attitudes," one of my great-grandmothers was named "Shining Meadow" (American Indian). My ethnic heritage is quite mixed and I am offended by accusations of racism. From my association with the folks at SSI, I suspect that they aren't very pleased about the "neo-Nazi" label, either.

Norman C. Koger, Jr.
Huntsville, TX

Ed: We pointed out the dictionary definition of the word, "aborigine," in our original answer to Mark Brown's letter (CGW #52). Be it hereby resolved that all further references to indigenous native populations use the term "autochthonous."

No Fooling



Steve Meretzky

I just read the review of *The Fool's Errand* by Alan Roberts in the October '88 issue, and I was dismayed by his put-down of what he calls the "button pushing" puzzles. Those puzzles were among the best and most original puzzles in the game! Roberts implies that the only solution to them is trying every possible combination by trial and error. In fact, each button affects the starting word or phrase according to a hidden rule, such as "Remove all A's" or "Replace any T with an E followed by a space." The player must deduce those rules and then use

(Continued on page 59)


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Don't Tread On Me!

Accolade's "Steel Thunder"—Modern Armor

by Wyatt Lee

The very mention of the M-1A1 tank conjures up images of cost overruns, technical failures, inefficiency (four gallons of fuel to the mile), and a vulnerability to Soviet anti-tank shells. The **General Dynamics** *M1A1* tank has had one of the most checkered pasts in the procurement process and has probably received more bad press and congressional opposition than any other military vehicle.



Steel Thunder is an intriguing simulation of modern armored combat from **Accolade**. The quality of this program suggests that modern tanks are getting a bad reputation and the scenarios invite the player to decide the issue for himself. In fact, the technical accuracy of this program will surprise those who think of Accolade as simply a publisher of action games. Until *Steel Thunder*'s release, *Apollo 18: Mission to the Moon* has probably been the company's most reality-based product. The care taken with *Steel Thunder* may be illustrated by the length of the manual. It is 43 full pages (as opposed to the 22 in *Apollo 18*) and contains enough facts, figures, diagrams, and hints to move the player well on his way to promotion and success. In addition, the product includes a keyboard overlay to simplify play.

TITLE:	Steel Thunder
SYSTEMS:	C-64/128
# PLAYERS:	1
PRICE:	$29.95
DESIGNER:	Tom Loughry
PUBLISHER:	Accolade San Jose, CA

Profiles in Tonnage

The Soviet forces are well-represented, with a good mix from those old T-55s and T-62s to the modern vehicles with 125mm guns, BMP-2s (the most modern armored personnel carriers with their 30mm autocannons), BTR-70s (light-armored infantry carriers—no BTR-80s, but they are still deployed in limited numbers), *Shilkas* (self-propelled anti-aircraft vehicles), *Gaskins* (reconnaissance vehicles with SAM launchers), and SAU 152s (self-propelled 152mm guns). The omission of the 2S7 self-propelled 203mm gun or 2S4 self-propelled mortar might be something of a disappointment to modern armored warfare enthusiasts, however.

United States forces include the: M1A1 *Abrams* tanks, M60A3 updates of the *Patton* series, M3 *Bradley* fighting vehicles, and M48A5 *Patton* medium tanks. The control panels of each of these vehicles have been meticulously modelled and offer a distinctive look with operational gauges, dynamic toggle switches, and functional indicator lights in the appropriate places. Perhaps of greatest significance, is the modelling of the effect of gun stabilization systems on all but the M48A5 *Patton*. This system has been part of the U.S. edge in armored vehicles up until the Soviets started including it on newer T72s and T80s.

Even better than the mix of vehicles, however, is the way that Loughry has graphically implemented the various tanks. When the player first sees another vehicle, it appears as a miniscule black square. As the player's tank closes on the other vehicle, it appears as an identifiable silhouette. These silhouettes are not only important for identification of friends and foes, but also provide important information on target facing and direction of movement. As the player becomes more proficient in recognizing these silhouettes, he gains an advantage in being able to load the most efficient type of ammunition against that particular target as early as possible. Loughry programmed this feature by taking the time to study lead miniature tanks used in table-top battles. By examining these miniatures from several different angles, he was able to provide these recognizable silhouettes.

Devil Coaches and Hell Wagons

In *Steel Thunder*, players take the viewpoint of commander of a modern tank. Although the simulation's design allows the player to view the landscape and action from three angles (driver, gunner, and commander), the perspective of play is definitely that of command. The commander is given the mission briefing at headquarters, selects his equipment and ammunition with regard to the mission and expected opposition, and selects a three-man crew (driver, gunner, and loader). Available crew members are selected from a roster that offers a letter grade from A (best) to D (worst) in three different facets of their assignment. Drivers are graded in driving speed, maneuver speed, and evasion speed; gunners are rated on day accuracy, night accuracy, and aim speed; and loaders are rated on reload speed, switch (types of ammo) speed, and fatigue. Crew selec-

tion is not simply chrome, but offers significant impact in the game.

Tanks have had a tremendous shock value in land warfare ever since their first major impact on a battle at Cambrai (in World War I). At Cambrai, demoralized infantry called the tanks, "devil coaches." In modern combat, the propensity for tanks to catch fire and metamorphose into smoldering rubble may merit the term, "hell wagon." The scenarios included in the game have a tendency to emphasize shock value and suicide missions as opposed to highly coordinated combat team missions. This is probably the weakest part of the reality being simulated. Many of the missions would seem better suited to infantry. For example, ambushing a light armor convoy of trucks, BTR-70s, and a BMP-2 would be accomplished more effectively with infantry. Once the enemy is in the center of the ambush, there needs to be someone to close the trap. How can you do that with one tank? Another scenario involves destroying an enemy mortar post. Wouldn't it be better to use artillery against that position? In fact, the only armored vehicle in the simulation that would be likely to get an assignment like these would be the M3 *Bradley*, not technically a tank.

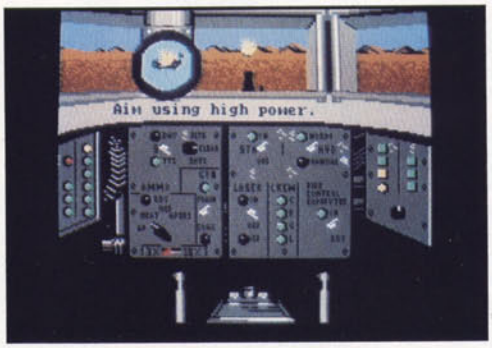


Rumbling "Rambo" Raiders

Nevertheless, if one is willing to accept the questionable military doctrine in the scenarios, the missions can be thrilling and exciting. In this way, the missions become more *Rambo* than reality, but still have plenty to commend them. The missions take place in three different theaters of operation: Cuba, Syria, and West Germany. The graphics do a good job of portraying the different terrain styles (although the West German scenarios may allow the ranges to be too long for those broken landscapes) and the landscapes scroll by realistically, depending on tank speed, direction, slew rate (how fast the turret or mini-turret turns) and viewpoint. The commander's viewpoint offers the farthest range of view and this is logical, since his position on the turret is physically the highest. Also, the sound effects for the incoming and outgoing shells are continuous, effective, and useful (noise indicates proximity). Particularly satisfying is the graphic depiction of explosions and the reduction of enemy targets to rubble. Once they are reduced to rubble, the "rubble" stays at that location. This helps in identifying one's position on the battlefield and direction of enemy movement.

Each mission has a primary target which is circled on the briefing map (accessed by pressing the "9" key). The commander chooses the best route to the objective by placing "X"s on the map as checkpoints and ordering the driver to proceed to those checkpoints. The briefing map can be accessed at any time and will show the present position of the player's tank. This is extremely helpful. On missions that require a deep penetration behind enemy lines, it is usually possible to skirt the edges of the map and avoid enemy contact until one is in proximity of the objective. Simply order the driver to go straight and switch to the commander's viewpoint (farthest range) in order to stay out of contact until it is necessary to close on the enemy. This is cautious and ultimately effective, but consumes a significant amount of time and fuel, so many players will eschew this in favor of direct advances.

Once the player has determined to engage the enemy, it is best to switch to the gunner's viewpoint and utilize the thermal site (which allows the gunner to see the targets through smoke, fog, or darkness) to zero in on the target. At this point, it is extremely important to have the right ammunition loaded. This is where the loader's reload and switch speed is vital. Reload speed is significant because there is a lag time after one fires a shell before one is able to fire the next shell. The lag time is proportional to the loader's reload speed. The loader's switch speed determines how long it takes to switch types of ammo. For example, one doesn't want to waste armor piercing (APFSDS) shells on BTR-70s or BMP-2s, so it may be necessary to switch to high-explosive anti-tank (HEAT) shells. Players are advised to pay particular attention to the ammunition effectiveness chart provided on page 33 of the manual. This information may provide the difference between a successful mission and a failure.



Depending on range, there is a lag time between firing the shell and observing the explosion. The simulation has taken care to model authentic effectiveness ranges and realistic angles of trajectory. This means that players will need to learn to "lead" the targets in order to be effective, not simply center the sights and fire. This offers both realism and challenge. In 1973, Israeli forces avoided this problem and extended their maximum effective range by deducing the narrow passes and gaps which Arab forces would have to move through. By night, Israeli infantry would place sticks in these areas and Israeli armor would aim their main guns until they could hit those sticks regularly. In this way, they were able to extend their range to ca. 4,800 yards. *Steel Thunder* commanders have to zero in the old fashioned way, so the gunner's.

If the situation gets tough, U.S. armor has an ace in the hole. The thermal site enables the gunner to make target acquisition in spite of smoke, while there is no certain knowledge of a Soviet counterpart to this technology. This means that the U.S. vehicles can put up a smoke screen and get away. This is a useful strategy in the game, *if* the commander doesn't wait until his smoke mortars are hit (usually the first damage taken) to utilize them.

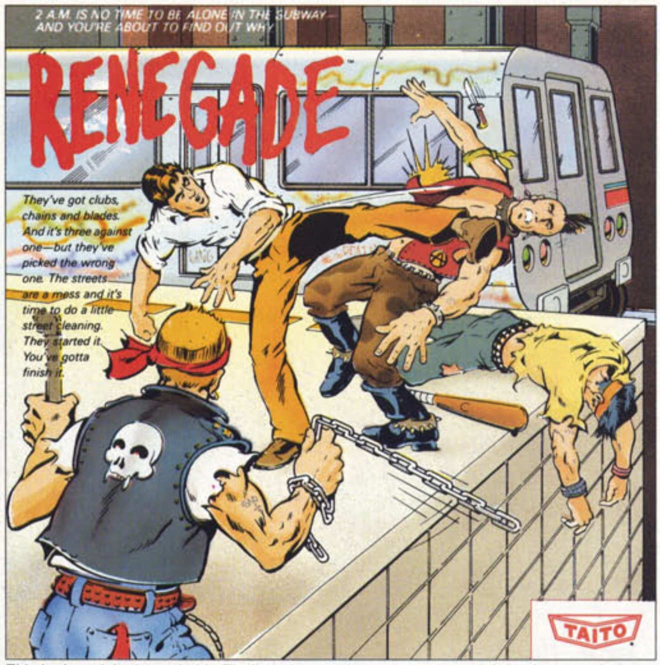
Thundering Heard

Steel Thunder is the first of an expected barrage of armored combat simulations to reach the market (**Avalon Hill** is expected to release *M-1* next year and don't be surprised if **Spectrum Holobyte** and **Digital Illusions** release a tank simulation in 1989). There is much to enjoy about the game: fast-moving graphics with features that assist game play, effective sound effects that enhance play, and a potential for fast-paced action. It is to be expected that future simulations will take standard military doctrine more into account and offer more precise mechanisms for aiming, loading, driving, etc. However, **Accolade** has: 1) paved the way for future tank simulations, 2) proven that the company is serious about developing more than action games, and 3) published a challenging game all in one bold stroke. As the commanding officer tells the player after a successful mission, "Congratulations! They never knew what hit them."

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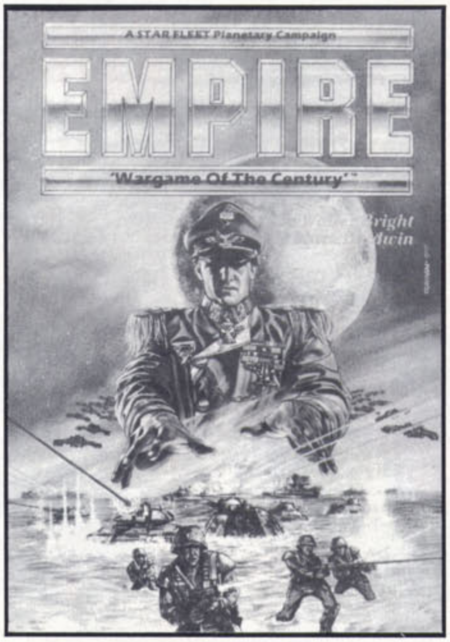
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Circle Reader Service #19

Everything You've Always Wanted to Know About Empire "Wargame of the Century"*



*but were afraid to blast!

by Mark Lewis Baldwin

Mark Baldwin is the co-designer of Empire: Wargame of the Century. *He took Walter Bright's VAX-based game and enhanced it for use on personal computers in three different formats. The result:* Empire *has become CGW's highest rated strategy game and has won CGW's 1988 overall Game of the Year Award.*

In this article, Mark shares some strategic principles which may be of interest to would-be conquerors.

This was getting too easy! In order to stop the Krellan conquest of the planet, you and your team had landed three dekals earlier on Spion Kop, the capital city of Sassania. Your small team of specialists were placed there to do what the Alliance, with its overextended resources, could not do directly. That is, unite the independent city-states of the planet before a similar team of Krellans accomplished the same. Now, three dekals have passed and everything is still going by "The Book." Over 35% of the planet is under your control and you haven't met anything except local resistance. Something is wrong. It is *too blasted easy!*

You think back to the initial days of the invasion. Sassania was already established as a beachhead when you arrived. "The Book" was specific about your initial steps . . .

On establishing your beachhead, it is vitally important that one reconnoiter the continent and surrounding waters. For security reasons, as well as delivering the team quickly and quietly, normal geological scans of the planet will not be available. Make up for this discrepancy immediately! *To that end, it is recommended that initial production be that of a fighter unit. Use this fighter unit for your initial quick reconnaissance.*

As soon as your first fighter unit is completed, change your production to armies. These are your bread and butter. You cannot conquer anything without your armies. Further, although that first fighter is infinitely valuable, the second is virtually useless until you have expanded the united territories a great deal.

That was the easy part. Quickly, you had explored the large island you had found, discovering two more city-states. It was, then, an easy matter to send your armies to include them in your *Empire*. That was just the start, "The Book" said more . . .

The unification of a planet can be broken up into three phases. The first phase, known as the "Growth Phase," occurs from the initial establishment of the beachhead until contact with enemy forces occurs. The second phase, "Contact Phase," occurs while you and your enemy are establishing the lines of battle. The third and final phase of unification, the "War Phase," occurs when one force decides to commit most of its resources to the destruction of the other.

Ah, the three so-called phases. Don't those dunderheads at Star Fleet HQ realize that war is never so simple? They probably never held a M-23473 blaster in their hands in their lives. If they did, the cost of synthetic feet would probably skyrocket!

Your primary task during the "Growth Phase" is to build your industrial base as large and as quickly as possible. If you have a stronger industrial base than your enemy when you enter the "War Phase," his defeat is assured. Most planets you will encounter in your star sector are mostly water with small continents/large islands scattered throughout. As such, your principal means of transportation is water. Get transport ships under construction as soon as possible. It takes time to build them and you will want them available as soon as your local land mass has been unified. So, get the construction started. While waiting for your transports, use your fighters to explore the waters near you. Find targets for your transports before they are finished so that they will not be wasted on exploration of their own.

Two strategies have been developed on usage of the transports during the "Growth Phase." The first strategy suggests that the transport be sent to the next independent land mass and its entire complement of armies to be unloaded. This frees the transport to immediately return for more armies. Meanwhile, the armies left behind can explore the new land mass, meeting and defeating all adversaries while supporting each other. The second strategy is more risky, requires a higher transport/army ratio of production, but can achieve much more spectacular growth. What one does under this strategy is to keep all armies on board the transport until an independent city is found on the coast. Then, you invade the city using just enough armies to capture the city. Once captured, the city should be used to produce new armies that will be used to subjugate the rest of the island/continent. Meanwhile, the transport is continuing to a new island and repeating the process with its remaining armies. This strategy allows

you to expand faster than the first, but places you in a much more spread out, hence weaker defensive position until all the cities in-between your capital and the frontier have been unified.

You had outsmarted "The Book" this time by combining the two strategies, but your rush to unification seems silly. There has been no enemy to worry about. In fact, there has been no contact with Krellan controlled forces at all!

It is assumed that you have been directed to unify the planet because the Krellans, under the command of Henri Zae IV, have already started an "Operation Big Brother" on the planet. This is your actual opponent. Depending on the actual rank of the Krellan commander, he may or may not have control over his/her own forces. Lower-ranked Krellans are subject to control of special computers designed for just the task you are involved with. Two programs are known to be used, labeled by Star Fleet Intelligence (Ha!) *as "Standard" and "Expert." There are rumors that a new and more sophisticated program is under development.*

While both are sophisticated, their tactical abilities are much stronger than their strategic abilities. They are also predictable. Star Fleet Intelligence (Double Ha!) *has managed to extract copies of the programs and have made them available in trainers. Study their actions well on the trainers. You will not only learn how they execute a conquest, but you may also learn a few unification tricks.*

Some known advantages of the "Expert" versus the "Standard" program are: 1) more intelligent control over industrial production, 2) more aggressive use of transports, 3) more efficient use of aircraft carriers, along with their assigned aircraft, 4) more active use of capital ships, 5) coordination of ships into fleets, and 6) better utilization and allocation of armies. Since Krellan programming techniques are different than those in the Alliance, it has been difficult to extract and analyze the differences. Therefore, this is only a partial list.

Your most serious problem will exist if the Krellan commander has authority to make his/her own decisions. In that instant, all bets are off. You will be working against a complete unknown (unless you have met the Krellan commander in combat before) and must use the utmost of your skills to defeat him/her.

That part of the answer you knew. Kadma Pztlam was on the planet somewhere. And you had tangled with her before. She was brilliant in the game that the two of you had previously fought. That was what was bothering you. *Where was she?!* In trying to find her, both you and "The Book" concur.

Information is your second highest priority during the "Growth Phase." It is critical to find all you can about the planet and your enemies as soon as possible so that you may plan accordingly. Fighters are good for local reconnaissance, as well as acting as an early warning system. To explore beyond your locally controlled territory, however, destroyers are the answer. They are cheap to build and move faster than any other vessel. Start construction of them as soon as you are able and send them out to explore. What is the layout of the planet? Where are its cities? Where is the enemy? These are the vital questions they must answer for you?

Contact reports are starting to come in. You have finally found Kadma to the west. One of your destroyers found the city of Isandlhwana in enemy hands. Unfortunately, it was immediately sunk by enemy fighters. Fortunately, one of your newly completed cruisers and a transport happen to be nearby. Won't Kadma be surprised when you return with your transport flanked by a task force to protect it.

Once contact has been made with enemy forces, the "Contact Phase" has been initiated. During the contact phase, it is recommended that minimum forces be used against the enemy unless a major weakness is seen in his/her defenses. Most of your resources should still be expended in capturing independent cities. Although an enemy city is worth twice what an independent city is worth (because its capture reduces the enemy's production at the same time it increases yours), the cost of capturing such a city is normally a magnitude greater than capturing an independent city.

Although you wish to invest minimal forces in contact with the enemy, you also desire the enemy to invest as much as possible in trying to hit you. So, utilize quick tease strikes and feints to cause your enemy to invest large resources in defense and ineffective offense.

Hairy Neubats' Guano! A report has just come in from the transport *Jervis Bay*. Hundreds of Kilobids east of our first contact with the Krellans, she has just been attacked by an enemy destroyer and is now sinking, taking all five armies aboard down with all hands. How did they slip that destroyer so far behind our lines? Now, just to stop that one destroyer, I have to change the orders to half a dozen ships and aircraft. What a waste of resources!

At least, we got our own licks in. The invasion at Isandlhwana turned out better than expected. One enemy cruiser was destroyed while it was in port and the cruiser *Siano Maru* was effective in giving our land forces additional protection. It will certainly cost Kadma a great deal to get that city back!

Be aware that once contact has been made, it is highly likely that enemy ships have infiltrated your own lines. It is now necessary to sanitize your unified areas of enemy forces and insure that no new forces sneak in. Such forces are not only dangerous to unescorted transports, but they force you to drain a much larger force to track them down. A pattern of fighters and destroyers on patrol duty can effectively defend large open areas of water and thus, prevent enemy intrusions. Be aware that your fighters will normally be unable to detect enemy submarines. This is why you need destroyers in coordination with the fighters.

This is also the time you should be infiltrating your own destroyers and submarines into enemy waters. Knocking out enemy transports can bring your enemy down to its knees faster than any other technique. If he cannot invade you or cannot support his own infrastructure when you hit him/her, the war is all but won.

At this time, you should also be preparing for the final "War Phase." Battleships and carriers can take a great deal of time to construct, hence they should be started long before they are needed. So, plan and balance out your city production accordingly. Also, since you are going to start losing transports more frequently to enemy attacks, match transport production, as well.

In addition, this is the time to start to reorganize your city production. Those cities well-protected and far away from the front lines should be used to build fighters and large ships. The rationale for building fighters is that they can be moved up quickly to the front lines. The rationale for building large ships behind the lines is that you will not be forced to retool in order to build other kinds of forces because enemy forces just appeared nearby.

Things are settling down to a slugfest, now. Your beachhead at Isandlhwana has been able to hold out while you've been taking a task force past the island for an end run to hit the continent behind it. If you can cut them off, the Krel-

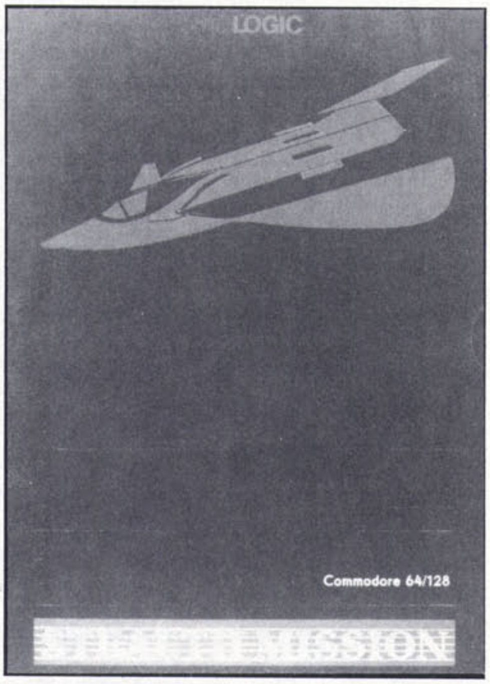
(Continued on page 63)

Stealth Mission

Sublogic Unveils Their "Stealth" Simulator

by Brad Bombardiere

This one's for all of us who "feel the need . . ." the need for speed! Mach 2 with our hair on fire, that's how we'd like to spend our weekends. Unfortunately (or perhaps, fortunately), the military doesn't rent out fighters for the weekend. Of course, it's doubtful that most of us could afford the rental charge (much less the damage waiver) on a $20 million aircraft. So, to fulfil our fantasy of flight, we turn to flight simulators. Well, strap yourselves in and fire up your computer for another Mach 2 fantasy, because there is a new kid on the block.

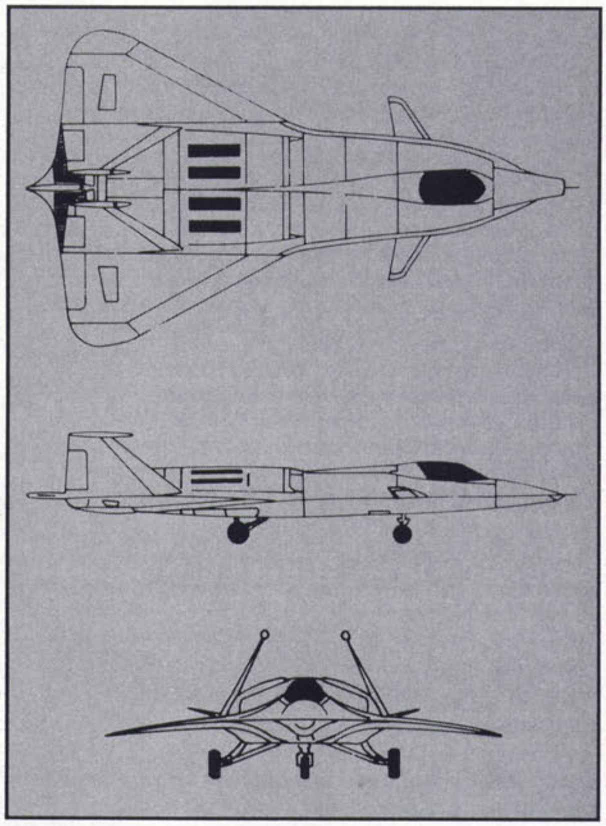


TITLE:	Stealth Mission
SYSTEM:	C-64/128
# PLAYERS:	1
PRICE:	$39.95
DESIGNER:	Steve Setzler
PUBLISHER:	Sublogic Corporation Champaign, IL

Sublogic, those guys who wrote the book on computerized flight have released *Stealth Mission*, a simulation that allows would-be pilots to fly one of three different aircraft: the F-19 Stealth Fighter, the X-29 Swept Wing, and the F-14 Tomcat. Each offers different flight characteristics and the missions have been designed to emphasize the strategic aspects of the game more than anything else.

Each pilot expecting to fly the vicarious skies of *Stealth Mission* should begin with the documentation. Unfortunately, this material lacks the technical support one would expect from a game that seems to be so sophisticated. The data provided for each of the aircraft was sparse, at best. It is obvious that these are top secret weapons systems, but the average public library lends itself to providing more information than the manual contains. In fact, the manual vaguely describes weapons and their characteristics in a sum total of only two pages (plus diagrams) and there is almost no information on what type of weapons you are up against. For example, there is really no pertinent data on types of anti-aircraft missiles a pilot might have to face. All of this type of information would have made the game both more interesting and easier to play. Fortunately, the information on navigation and other characteristics of flight was helpful.

After the start-up screen, players have the option of



choosing the type of mission preferred from various types. These types include objectives located in the mountains, around ancient ruins, or at sea. There is even a mission that is essentially a marathon bomber run. The problem is that these missions are virtually generic. Sublogic does not specifically mention either a theatre of war or a possible war. In fact, the only mention of enemy strength in the manual involves some general notes about MIGs. In other words, the manual leaves players strictly on their own to figure out the best strategy to use in the different scenarios.

Next, the game asks players to choose the jet and weapons to be used. This reviewer recommends that no matter which plane is selected, players load each given aircraft with as many Mavericks as possible. The F-19 is the least maneuverable, but it is, of course, almost invisible to radar. The X-29 is extremely maneuverable, but has the least amount of weapons it can carry. The F-14 is not only fast, but it has medium maneuverability, great range, and carries a tremendous amount of weapons. Matching the type of aircraft to the type of mission is an extremely important consideration with regard to success in this game.

At this point, players can throttle up and take off. The difficulty is that the controls are sluggish, at best, and a lag time of nearly half a second is so annoying that it makes dogfighting almost impossible. If, however, the lag time in *Flight Simulator II* was not perceived by players as annoying, this one will not either. It is essentially the same. This reviewer is bothered by the fact that the lag time leads to a severe oversteering problem. There are two ways to get around this problem. One way is to hit Control-F. This eliminates all of the scenery and allows the computer to speed up

(Continued on page 16)

[[*LUCASFILM ON THE ART AND SCIENCE OF ENTERTAINMENT.*]]

COMBAT FLYING IS PURE SCIENCE. UNTIL THE ENEMY SHOWS UP.



IF YOU'VE EVER FLOWN a PC, you know how it can simulate every nuance of an airplane's performance envelope. And if you concentrate hard enough on the instruments, you'll soon learn what the limits are.

But when you're making a torpedo run at an enemy flattop, with flak blowing by your canopy and two Zeroes chewing up your tail, all that goes out the window. And you learn to fly by the seat of your pants.

That's the idea behind *Battlehawks 1942,*™ the new WWII naval air combat simulator from Lucasfilm Games. Besides the intellectual challenge of mastering six classic carrier planes, you get the white-hot rush of diving into some very hairy situations.

"My first burst of tracers skimmed the Val's tail. Just as I corrected my aim, he dove. I stuck like glue to his plane, taking it apart by bits and pieces. Suddenly, he pulled up and bailed through the shattered canopy. Moments later, the Val exploded..."

RELIVE HISTORY. OR REWRITE IT.

Battlehawks 1942 gives you an authentic pilot's eye view — from both sides — of four battles that turned the tide in the Pacific. As an American carrier pilot, you'll fly Wildcat fighters, Dauntless dive bombers and Avenger torpedo bombers. From the Japanese side, you'll fly Zeroes, Vals and Kates.



You'll tighten up your combat skills in a dozen training missions, then fly more than 30 real ones, from the Coral Sea to the Santa Cruz Islands.

"In early 1942, American planes were no match for my Zero. I was a hawk in a flock of geese — soaring, looping, pouncing, destroying. I was truly saddened for the brave men in those sluggish planes. All too soon, the planes got better..."

EVEN THE THEORY IS REAL.

The technical detail and historical depth of *Battlehawks 1942* are bound to satisfy the most hard-core simulation buffs. Everything has been exhaustively researched, right down to the optimum airspeed and attack angle for dropping torpedoes.



Bombing a moving ship half a mile below, diving at 250 mph and dodging flak, can be a little tricky.



Your Wildcat's heavier armor and guns win in a shootout, but watch out if a Zero gets on your tail.

Flight characteristics and instruments are authentic. So are weapons and enemy tactics. About the only feature that isn't authentic is something combat pilots never dreamed of. An instant replay camera.

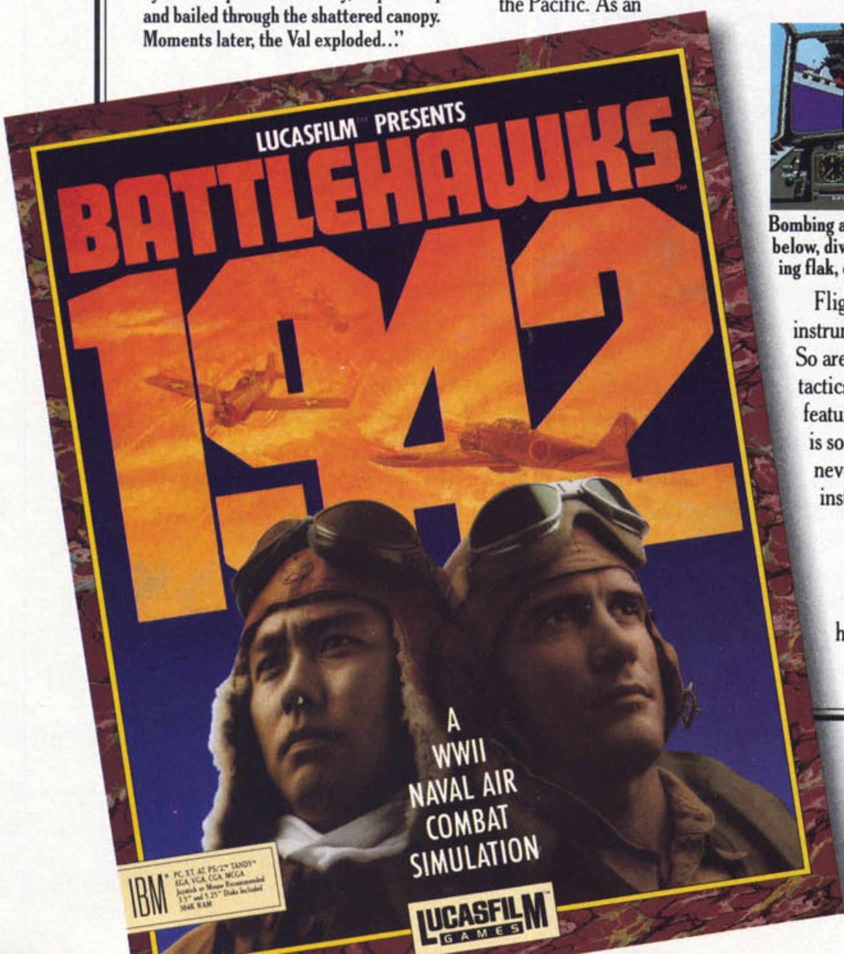
GROUND SCHOOL IT ISN'T.

We asked WWII pilots how to make *Battlehawks 1942* feel like the real thing. To a man, they said make it *intense.*

So instead of polygon-block graphics, we use high-resolution, digitally-rendered images. Ships and planes look almost photographic. Bombs and torpedoes explode in infernos of flames and smoke. The feeling, as one veteran pilot put it, is like flying into a beehive.

And that's where the science leaves off, and the fun starts.

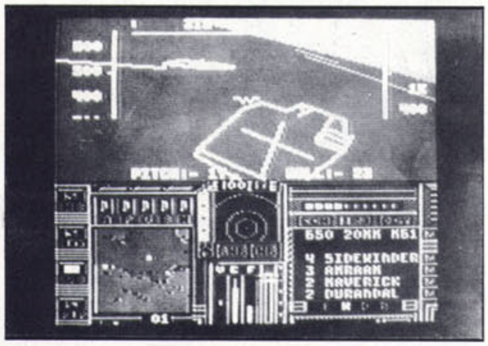
LUCASFILM™ GAMES



Stealth Mission

(Continued from page 14)

the animation. This, in turn, makes the controls more responsive. The other way of getting around the slug-gish controls is to achieve lock-on, then, hit Shift-G. This automatically levels and centers the aircraft. It is also a great way to get out of those suicidal maneuvers that we all simply must try from time to time.



The game's graphics display is a mixed bag. The cockpit graphics lack the attention to detail that many of us have become accustomed to in other flight simulations. The instruments were somewhat confusing in their placement on the control panels and this made taking a quick scan of vital information somewhat difficult.

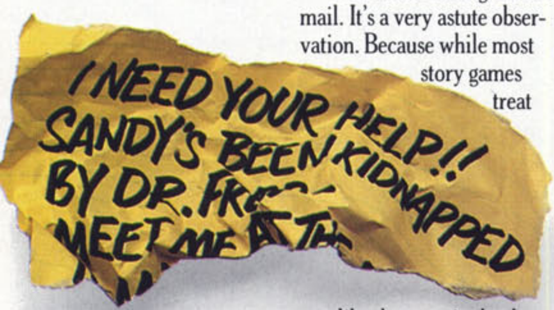
Outside the cockpit, however, the scenery graphics are fantastic! Instead of the usual 3-D stick figures, mountains and other scenery are filled in. One of the most exciting aspects to this is flying through the canyon in the ancient ruins campaign. Additional visual effects involve the different views available. Pressing the right key gives pilots the ability to see their aircraft from any angle. Pressing Function-7 allows a given pilot to see a "missile's eye view" as it homes in on its target. Another amazing viewpoint is observing the aircraft from one side or the other as the pilot ejects, his parachute opens, and he gently drifts to earth. In addition, Sublogic has made *Stealth Mission* compatible with its full line of scenery disks. Of course, there is a price to pay for such quality, especially on a machine with limited memory like the C-64/128, and that price is paid in the lag time.

Since Sublogic wrote the book on flight simulators, consumers expect quality graphics, attention to detail, and interesting situations from those products. Therefore, even though this game doesn't really offer the intensity that one could expect from other recent flight simulations, the potential buyer must weigh the abstract nature of the scenarios and somewhat slower pace against the graphic excellence and technical quality of the Sublogic line.

NEW HOPE FOR BATTERED STORY GAMERS.

"THERE'S A LOT I LIKE about computer adventures, but it sure isn't fun getting killed all the time. That's why *Maniac Mansion* is so refreshing — I can play from start to finish without dying once!"

That's more than great fan mail. It's a very astute observation. Because while most story games treat you like the meat in the dog food factory, Lucasfilm story games treat you like a human being who just wants some good clean fun.



The fun starts with an engaging plot, hot graphics and tasty puzzles. But what keeps it going is a unique design that lets you play the game instead of fighting the computer.

THE NO-TYPING INTERFACE.

Today's story games evolved from text adventures. The interface, in most cases, remained in the swamp.



In *Maniac Mansion*,® a movie-style "cut-scene" quickly establishes the characters' personalities.



Just three "clicks," and you'll send *Zak McKracken*™ over to the pawn shop counter to buy a pair of nose glasses.

With conventional story games, whenever you want your character to do something, you type. And type. And type.

Suppose you want to pick up a green leafy object. Well, you might try typing, "pick up plant." If that doesn't work, you might try "bush," "shrub," "tree," and so on. After a while, you might try a different form of entertainment.

Not with Lucasfilm's new "point 'n' click" interface, though. All the words you need are right on the screen. Just click the cursor on them to choose characters, objects, and actions.

Now you can play an entire fifty hour game without typing a single word. Or putting your life on hold until you realize the green leafy thing is a... plastic fern.

MORE STORY. LESS GORY.

Most story game designers seem to think people love to get clobbered.

We don't. After all, how much fun can it be to have a fatal accident every three and a half minutes... then reload your saved game, take a few timid steps forward, and save it again. Seems more like paranoia than entertainment.

That's why Lucasfilm story games make it downright difficult to die. Oh, you'll get into major hot water all right, but you'll have the fun of getting out of it, too.

LET'S GET CRAZY TOGETHER.

Just pick up a copy of *Maniac Mansion*,® the comedy thriller about a kidnapped cheerleader, a very mad scientist, and a hilariously creepy rescue mission.



Or *Zak McKracken And The Alien Mindbenders*,™ where you and a seedy tabloid journalist save the world from space aliens who want us all to have the IQs of turnips.

You'll love the twisty plots and the goofy characters. You'll crack up constantly with the zany one-liners and sight gags. And you'll go just a little crazy with the mind-bending puzzles.

Crazy, but nicely crazy.



LUCASFILM™ GAMES

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Looking for sparkle and excitement in your fantasy role-playing games? Then look for these colorful titles from SSI:

QUESTRON II.™ Travel back in time to find the way to destroy the Evil Book of Magic — before it can be completed by the six Mad Sorcerors led by Mantor.

The superb color graphics is nothing short of stunning. The visual presentation of the mystical world — from the wilderness, towns and dungeons to the countless characters and monsters — is truly breathtaking.

QUESTRON II offers an experience so awe-inspiring, it surpasses even its legendary predecessor!

APPLE, APPLE II GS, C-64/128, ATARI ST, IBM, AMIGA.

DEMON'S WINTER.™ The five adventurers you guide in this role-playing game are faced with the apocalytic menace of the demon-god, *Malifon.* Although trapped inside a volcano, Malifon threw the entire world into a deep, frigid winter — and turned the oceans into blood. In this desolate setting, his minions thrive and threaten to free Malifon!

Your mission is clear: Search the lands and seas of this vast world for the spells needed to trap Malifon forever and undo his wintry curse.

Though the Demon's Winter may chill your bodies, may courage, honor and perseverance warm your souls!

APPLE, C-64/128.



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To receive SSI's complete product catalog, send $1.00 to: SSI, 1046 N. Rengstorff Avenue, Mountain View, CA 94043.

King's Quest IV

Hints and Harangues for "Rosella"

by Scorpia

When you first open the package of this game, you may feel a little startled and possibly hesitant: it comes on nine 5.25" disks or four 3.5" disks. Further, if you install the game on a hard drive (highly recommended), it will eat up about 3 meg worth of space (make sure you have room!). So, you might think that this is some incredible epic adventure that will take months of playing time.

Actually, most of that space is used for graphics. They are *very* pretty, full-screen and beautifully detailed. Many of the screens also have animation, which has both good points and bad ones. The animation adds a nice touch, but slows Rosella's movements by a large factor whenever she's in an animated screen.

The game begins, in fact, with a very long animated sequence (you can skip this later on) explaining just how Rosella came to be in a strange land dressed as a simple peasant girl. Boiled down to essentials, King Graham is dying and Rosella can cure him by obtaining a special fruit. However, she also has to help the good fairy Genesta, the only person who can send her back to her own land. Genesta herself is dying and only a special talisman, stolen by the evil witch Lolotte, can restore her. Thus, Rosella must find the magic fruit and get the talisman from Lolotte before she can return home to save her father.

Rosella starts on the seashore, where she is left pretty much to her own devices. Genesta doesn't tell her very much about the land or indeed, anything else. Rosella must find out everything for herself. The first thing to do is walk around the area, which is only about 30 locations or so, to see what's there (the area wraps around at the edges in most places to the north and south).

Movement is done with the arrow keys. One touch on any key sends Rosella in that direction and another touch on the same key stops her. Rosella will, therefore, continue to walk automatically unless she comes to an obstacle or reaches the next screen. Beyond this, keyboard input is used to accomplish actions, such as "get lamp." There is also a set of function keys for often repeated commands, especially save and restore.

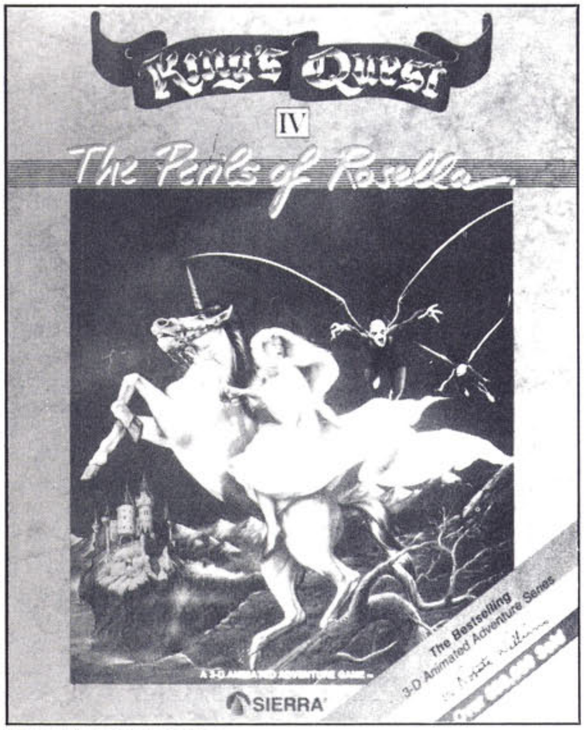
Walk-thru On The Mild Side

Warning: This section of the review contains specific hints related to "King's Quest IV" and should be avoided by readers who would prefer to complete the game without assistance.

Watch out for the weird trees and the ogre hut. If you walk into a screen with strange trees, leave immediately or that will be the end of Rosella. The ogre hut and surroundings should also be avoided for now or Rosella will end up as dinner. It's a good idea to save periodically, in case you run into trouble.

You should visit Lolotte early on in the game. She doesn't especially trust you, but for her son Edgar's sake, is willing to give you the benefit of the doubt by sending you on little quests to bring her certain items, one at a time. Therefore, much of the game is taken up in solving puzzles to obtain these items.

Many of the puzzles are based on old fairy tales (a Roberta Williams "trademark"). So, if you're up on those, you may have a little easier time of it in some situations. Most people know about kissing frogs, but that's just one of several in the adventure.

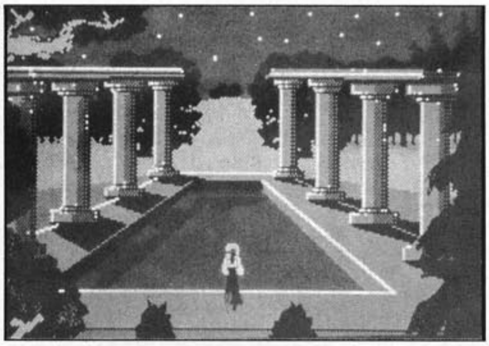


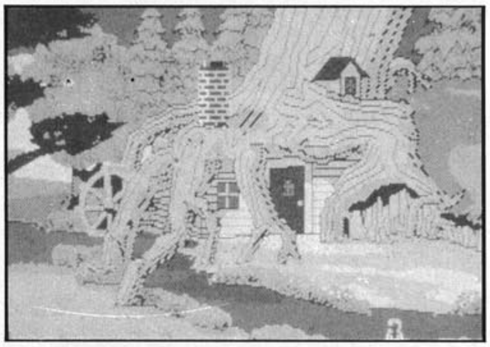
Some of them are also not too fair. For instance, one object Rosella needs is a bridle. Finding this can be a frustrating experience, since it is not visible on the screen, and you would never know it was there unless you had Rosella search every possible spot on the screen. There are no clues at all to this, therefore you might not even search very long, if at all. And as the location itself is not easy to reach (you have to so some swimming, among other things) it makes the situation that much more exasperating.

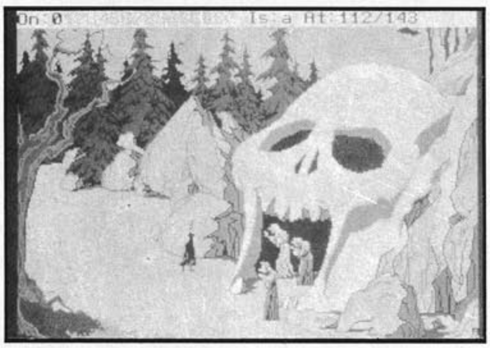
TITLE:	King's Quest IV: The Perils of Rosella
SYSTEMS:	IBM
# PLAYERS:	1
PRICE:	$49.95
DESIGNER:	Roberta Williams
PUBLISHER:	Sierra Coarsegold, CA

Another irritation is all the climbing around that has to be done. Early on, you'll probably find the secret door that leads to a winding staircase. As you might expect, one wrong step and Rosella falls to her death. That's bad enough, but what you don't know at the time is that there's no need to climb the stairs until after evening has come (and you've done some other things as well), meaning many people will make the tedious trip at least twice, if not more.

There are other staircases to climb (also winding), as well as a whale's tongue (probably the hardest climbing sequence in the game). Saving often is the best thing when you're in one of these situations. That's especially important inside the whale, as you have only a limited number of moves before Rosella is overcome by noxious fumes.







You will also have to sit through some tedious animation in the dwarf's house. This is a puzzle in the game, the solution to which is rather sexist, although obvious. When the dwarfs come in (after you're done), Rosella stands there as a dwarf enters, walks to the fireplace, gets a bowl of soup, walks to the table, and sits down. The next dwarf enters, walks to the fireplace, gets a bowl of soup, walks to the table, etc. This happens seven times and there is no way around it. Save the game when this is finished so you don't have to go through it again.

After nightfall, you'll find ghosts in the old house in the graveyard. They appear one at a time and each has to be satisfied with something before the next one shows up. Once you've figured out what do to for the first one, you know pretty much what needs to be done for the rest of them, so solving this puzzle becomes pretty much a matter of boring repetition.

Getting back to Lolotte, the first thing she wants is a unicorn. There's one roaming around the meadow, but it's rather shy, so you'll have to make friends with it. Then you need the infamous bridle so you can ride the unicorn. Among other things, it will be necessary to get the pole from the fisherman, as well as taking a long swim, before this task can be accomplished.

Still not entirely satisfied, Lolotte will send you to get a hen that lays golden eggs from the ogre. You'll need to have found the troll cave (which is hidden) beforehand. It also helps to snoop carefully around the house once you're inside, but save first in case you walk into the wrong room. This is probably the simplest sequence in the game.

Speaking of the troll cave, it's a dangerous place. Even with light, you don't see very much. The graphic effect is very nice, but if you're not extremely careful in there, Rosella could fall into a chasm. The best thing to do is watch the edges of the light and move slowly. If there's a troll around (his appearance is random), get out and try again later. Save often.

Somewhere in all this you need to take some time out to find the fruit that will restore King Graham. There are a number of things you must do before you can obtain the fruit, among them dealing with the frog. What you need is in plain sight in another screen, although easy to miss if you don't look carefully. You'll also have to solve the Pan riddle as well; the minstrel can be helpful with that one.

Now Lolotte sends you out after Pandora's box. This is a tough one. You'll have to make it past the weird trees (if you've mapped, you probably know the spot) to the weird sisters. You shouldn't have too much trouble avoiding their clutches if you move carefully and don't get too close. They have something you need later on, so you'll have to work out a trade of some kind. Just don't be too nice to them (they are evil, after all).

You will also have to get into the mysterious crypt in the graveyard (you've been wanting to do that for awhile, I'll bet). There's a key somewhere, although obtaining it will take awhile; there are a few things you'll have to do (more than once) before you find it.

Unfortunately, after you give Lolotte the box, she doesn't quite keep her word to let you go (you didn't really expect her to, did you?). Instead, she locks you into a room in the castle. Luckily, you have a friend who provides you with a means of escape, but that isn't quite enough. After all, Lolotte might come after you, and she might not be too charitable the next time. Besides, you still have to get the talisman so you can help Genesta and get back to save your King Graham.

Once out of the room, you come to (did you guess?) a winding stone staircase. Negotiate this carefully, and also be careful what rooms you walk through. Lolotte had all your items taken away, and you'll need to find them before going further.

What to do about Lolotte when you finally reach her is not very hard to figure out; there aren't many things that would work in this situation, after all. Her big death scene is a trip to watch, and rather funny (if you can imagine a funny death scene).

However, Rosella isn't done yet. She still has to get the talisman back to Genesta, and she'll have to take the long way to do it. There's also a couple of other things she might want to do on the way back to make things tidy, as well as pick up a perfect score.

The actual ending, like the introduction, is all automatic; you just sit back and watch. Rosella is returned home, King Graham is saved to rule many more years, and all's well that ends well.

Tell-tale Part

King's Quest IV is not your typical adventure game. Some puzzles are clever, others merely tedious. The storyline is wrapped and connected with cinematic touches which utilize sparkling graphics and surprisingly good music (I'm told this is especially true with one of the new sound boards from Ad Lib, Roland, or IBM!).

Gamers who demand constant interactivity will probably become impatient with these cute cameos, but many will be pleased.

Bottom line: Excellent graphics, good music, uneven puzzles, and deliberate pace. The overall impression of the game is more gentle and non-violent than most adventure games. So, the bottom line is that it's a matter of personal taste.

Interview with Roberta Williams

Designer of the "King's Quest" Series

CGW met with Roberta on a recent public relations tour. She was travelling throughout the country demonstrating King's Quest IV: The Perils of Rosella and autographing copies of the game and photographs.

CGW: Was the original *Adventure* the first computer game you ever played?

Roberta: Right, I mean, if you don't count *Pong*. We had a *Pong* machine before we bought our Apple. In fact, I played the original *Adventure* before we had our Apple. Ken brought a terminal home from work and would use a modem to hook into an IBM mainframe down in L.A. somewhere. We would play it and our moves would be printed out on hard copy. That was a long time ago. I usually just say that I played the original *Adventure* on the Apple because it is so difficult to explain.

CGW: As both a female designer and a female game player, we wonder what the original attraction of *Adventure* was and why you liked playing it.

Roberta: I've always been a book reader. I love books more than anything, almost, especially in the fantasy area. When I played *Adventure*, it was words and it was like reading a book. You would get these paragraphs about what you had done, but I could talk to it and it could talk back to me. I felt like I could manipulate the story and that was better than a book.

CGW: Why there aren't more women involved in the hobby?

Roberta: The only answer I can really give, and I see it all the time with kids, is that you put a computer in front of a boy and they automatically go toward it and get comfortable with it. Girls need a little extra push. Even today, you have to say, "Don't be afraid. It's okay." They're better than women, though, but I still think girls are mostly uncomfortable with technical things. Even if you go into a stereo store, what do you see? Mostly men and boys looking at them and the women standing back saying, "Can we get help?" Don't you think that's true, kinda'?

CGW: That brings up a related question. You've set up a situation in the "King's Quest" series where two characters, one male and the other female, seem to have an equal chance to inherit the throne. In fact, you've veritably set up the sequel to follow the boy in *King's Quest V*, but you chose to follow the girl in *King's Quest IV*. Is your intent to involve more women, even as *Mixed-Up Mother Goose* was an attempt to involve young children in computer gaming?

Roberta: Yes, I designed *King's Quest IV* with that in mind. I figured that men and boys would accept a female heroine and think it was okay. Then, possibly the women and girls would notice it and become attracted to it.

Yes, with the children, too. However, this was also true with *Mixed-Up Mother Goose*. In *Mixed-Up Mother Goose*, you have a choice as to whether you are a girl or a boy. Originally, I designed the game where you were going to be a boy, but I said, "I can't have that!" So, now it asks if you're going to be a boy or a girl. Then, all of a sudden I realized that if you were going to be a boy or a girl that it ought to look like them. Now, they can choose color of hair or even color of skin.

CGW: Besides the fact of a female protagonist, what do you think will bring the women and girls to the game? The music? Animation?

Roberta: Hopefully, all of it. The game is certainly more colorful and prettier than games that I'm used to. The animation is more like what you would see in an animated cartoon series. It should feel more comfortable to them because the music is more interesting.

CGW: What about violence? Is there going to be any violence that would put them off?

Roberta: Not really. The only violence in the game is at the very end and then, it's unintentional. You don't mean to commit violence, but you do.

CGW: Besides the obvious differences of improved graphics, sound, and memory capabilities, what would you say is the biggest difference between your recent designs and your earliest design, *Mystery House*?

Roberta: The storyline. I'm really trying to develop a sophisticated storyline. Even in *King's Quest I*, there wasn't much of a storyline. I'm trying to develop the plot more and be more sensitive to characterization and why characters do what they do. Also, I'm trying to do better in understanding what people type in and why. With this game, I watched a person sit down and play it for an hour without ever typing in something that the game didn't understand. They had never seen it before and the parser understood everything they typed in. I'm very pleased with that. Beyond that, they're getting a little bigger, which I've got to stop.

CGW: Is it true that *Mystery House*, your first design, was inspired by Agatha Christie's *Ten Little Indians*?

Roberta: Yes, as well as the game, *Clue*.

CGW: Is there was any direct literary inspiration for the *King's Quest* series?.

Roberta: Well, as a kid, my all-time favorite reading



was fairy tales, literally, fairy tales. I don't know why but I read every fairy tale I could get my hands on. I read them and re-read them.

CGW: So that's why there's, at least, a cameo by fairy tale characters in each game?

Roberta: Apparently.

CGW: Besides the introductory and final wrap, what cinematic effects have been added to *King's Quest IV*?

Roberta: The way we change screens. We have a dissolve, wipes, iris in, and iris out. Those are all cinematic approaches. Of course, the use of music to create an atmosphere and the use of more dialogue to have conversations with characters. Dialogue may not be cinematic, but I think it is.

CGW: As the author, what is the most satisfying aspect of the *King's Quest IV* story to you?

Roberta: I like the heroine, Rosella. I guess because she's a part of me that's coming out. I really identified with her. Sometimes she's delicate, but she's strong, knows what she wants, she's not afraid to do what she has to do. She's courageous. It was fun for me to do a female character.

CGW: Is there a love interest for Rosella?

Roberta: Well, let's just say that the possibility exists for a love interest that could be developed in a future game.

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Warning: Although "The Scorpion's Tale" is a warm and comfortable tavern of the mind with a nice cozy fire of vibrant images, our resident storyteller conjures up illuminating hints about games. If the gentle reader eschews hints, let him beware.

Scorpion's Tale: Man Hunter New York

As Told by Scorpia

Ah, it's Christmas time again! Fred has his shrunken head garland on the wall, snow is drifting past the windows, a cheery blaze burns in the fireplace, the Christmas Tree Monster blinks its lights in the corner, and all's right with the world. Then again, maybe all's not right with the world, if the date happens to be 2004 AD.

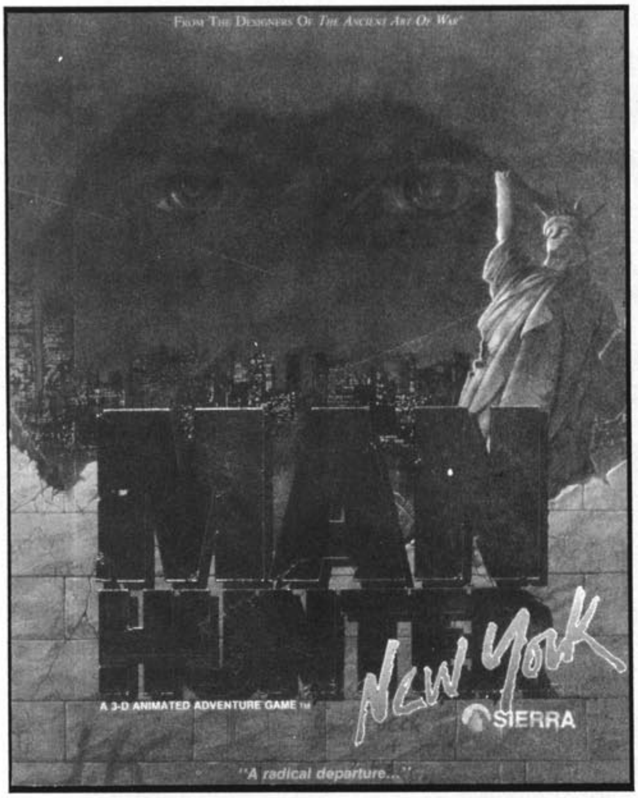
Manhunter: New York, from **Sierra**, is a wickedly humorous and bizarre game set in the near future. Strange aliens that look like flying eyeballs (called orbs), have invaded and taken over the city of New York. The resident population, or what's left of it, is restricted to Manhattan and a small part of Brooklyn. In addition, by order of the orbs, all humans must wear only brown robes as clothing.

For secret reasons of their own, the orbs choose certain human individuals to become manhunters. Guess who's just been chosen to be a manhunter? Right! Of course, you haven't the faintest idea of what being a manhunter is all about or why they picked you. Maybe it's better that you don't know (ask too many questions, and you might be sent to Chicago . . .)

In any case, you get a neat little computer called MAD (Manhunter Assignment Device) to help you, and then, you're off on your first assignment. They all begin the same way, with an orb floating into your apartment to tell you what it wants you to investigate (by the way, keep the manual handy; you have to enter a word from it each time you play).

Then, you get out MAD and do some tracking. The computer shows you the vicinity, plus a little revolving square with a T in the middle. This is the person whose movements are being tracked. You watch where they go and what they do until the tracking ends for one reason or another.

This is very important, since the number of locations you can travel to are rather limited. In most cases, for example, you can't go to a location until you have already learned something about it, usually (although not always) through MAD tracking.



Travel, by the way, is extremely fast. Whenever you want to move from one place to another, a map of Manhattan (and part of Brooklyn) comes up on the screen. A small blue and red sphere is moved around the map with arrow keys or a joystick until it's over the area you want to go to (available areas show as blinking yellow squares). Hitting the "Enter" key takes you there immediately.

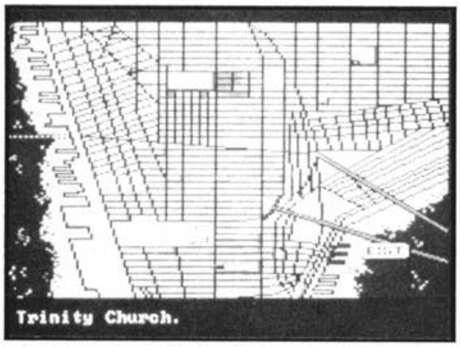
The first day, you track a mysterious person who sets off an explosion at Bellevue Hospital. Trekking (tracking?) on over there, you discover a rather gruesome corpse. There will be several other unpleasant bodies to view as the game progresses, so get used to it now. There's nothing like protruding tongues and upturned eyes to make your day. Having seen all there is to see at Bellevue, you continue tracing the path of the unknown bomber, which takes you to a bar in the Flatbush section of Brooklyn. Before you can do anything else in this bar, you'll have to indulge in a little knife throwing.

Most of you know by now how I feel about arcade stuff in adventure games (boo! hiss! bah! humbug!), and, unfortunately, there is a fair amount of it here. On the other hand, the authors have added a feature to the game, for which I can forgive the arcade sequences.

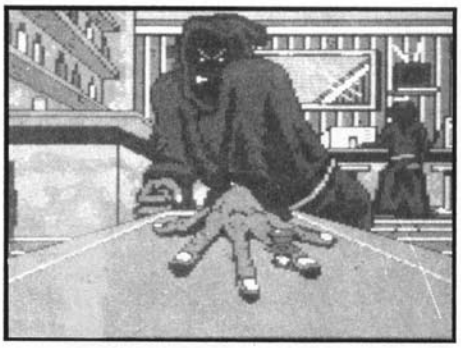
In the knife throwing, you try to get four knives safely between the fingers of an outstretched hand. A small knife appears on the screen, moving slowly back and forth. At the right moment, you hit return, and hope the knife hits the table and not a finger. Should you make a mistake and allow the knife to draw blood, you will undoubtedly lose your head (the authors are really into blood and gore).

However, there's no need to reach for the restore key. After you watch your demise, the authors appear on the screen, dressed in regulation brown robes. Sometimes, they have a snide remark to make, sometimes they will give you a clue. Either way, they back you up to just before whatever it was that killed you, as many times as you need it. If there has to be arcade sequences in an adventure game, this is a good way to handle them. Once you manage to throw the knives properly, you can play the video game in the corner (I recommend using the arrow keys to manipulate the little figure rather than a joystick.).

Now, you'll be able to visit Coney Island. Sorry to say, though, you won't be able to ride the Ferris wheel or the parachute jump. All that's available are



The Aerial View of New York City



Play a Game of Life or Death



One of Your Predecessors

three (oh no!) arcade games: break the balloons with darts, knock the kewpie dolls off the shelf, and toss a ring around a bottle.

What's it all about? Well, that's where watching the screen carefully comes in. This game is extremely visually oriented; clues and parts of clues can be anywhere, and it's up to you to make the necessary associations. There is, for instance, a subtle connection between the video game and Coney Island which is not readily apparent. Remember, practically everything you come across is important in some way.

Two other locations to visit today are Trinity Church and a public restroom in Prospect Park. You can look around the church, although there isn't much you can do there right now. As for the restrooms, well, what does one do in them (aside from scrawling graffiti on the walls?).

You'll know when you're finished for the day when the orbs send an override to MAD, and request one or more names from you (this is how each of the first three days end). Let's hope you have all the names they want. If you've been messing around a long while and the orbs don't contact you, this is a hint that you haven't done everything that needed doing. Travel around to the various locations and see if you can figure out what you may have missed.

Day two begins with the orbs wanting you to investigate a break-in at Grand Central Station (now, of course, closed). There are three people to track, and it's vital that you follow *all* of them. It can be a little tricky to get the tracker on the right people, but it can be done.

Of the several places to visit today, the worst by far is Central Park. The park is now a minefield, and travelling through it is, well, dangerous. You have the MAD tracker to help you, but even so, you will probably end up as manhunter mush several times if not more. The tracker can give you the general direction in which to go, but figuring out the precise direction from several close together is not easy (this part of the game I could have done without; it was on the tedious side). There's no trick to this, just careful observation along with trial and error.

The night club is only slightly better. You can't get in the front door, but there's a convenient alleyway you can sneak into. Unfortunately, you aren't alone. There are four nasty punks you have to get past, one at a time. The first two throw knives, the third hurls Molotov cocktails, and the fourth has some sort of weird gun (he's the fastest and the hardest to overcome). The process of getting past them is the same for all four: jump the low ones, duck the high ones, and get close enough so you can knock out the punks (pow!). They get harder as you go along, but if you are killed along the way, you only have to start again with the current opponent. You aren't forced to start over.

Once inside the nightclub, save the game. So, if you get tossed out before obtaining what you need, you won't have to do the alley again. Remember, you didn't kill those punks, just knocked them out.

There's not much to do at the Deli . . . you can't get anything from the machines, and given the menu tacked to the bulletin board, that's probably just as well. Still, like all the other locations, this one too is important.

I see I forgot to mention the apartment. This is one place you have to figure out on your own; you don't track anyone to it. Mainly this requires a name (a full name). MAD's other ability (aside from tracking) is to give you addresses of people's homes. The catch is that you have to know the full name first.

Now, improve your cultural background with a trip to the Museum of Natural History. Hmmm . . . well, maybe not, since all the exhibits were removed awhile back. Oh, well, at least, you know the route to take from MAD . . . make sure you take it exactly, because your supply of door openers is extremely limited. One mistake and it's time to restore.

Day three gets off to a cheery start at Greenwood Cemetery, where you can admire the view of an orb impaled on a spear stuck into a grave. After you've had your fill of that, you might want to visit the theater, where the wall safe is easily found, but not so easily opened. Guess you're missing something, huh?

Maybe it's at the pawnshop. All you have to do is pick the right badges from the display. Simple, eh? Do be careful that you don't end up losing your head again, though. It looks much better attached to your shoulders.

Once you've done that, there are a few puzzles to solve. Don't worry, if you get crunched, the designers will pop in with a helpful clue for you (I waited the whole game for them to pop up one time saying "No one expects the Spanish Inquisition", but they never did).

There's another apartment to find, by the way. You've seen (or should have) both halves of the name this day, so it shouldn't be hard to locate the place. What you need to do there is another matter; just don't be taken in by the obvious.

Now, it seems you're at rather a loose end, since there's nowhere else to go (at least it looks that way). Of course, looks can be deceiving. What you need, of course, is a name. One might even say *the* name. You got half of it a long time ago and most of the rest of it, too, for that matter.

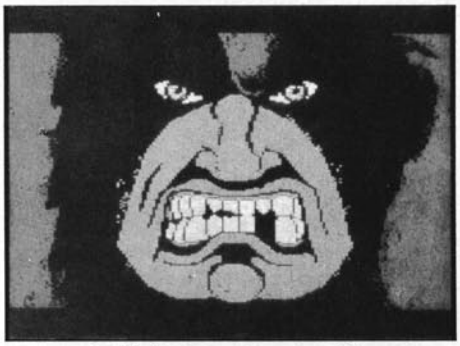
This leads you to the final area, complete with computer monitor. Go ahead, log in . . . you won't learn anything if you don't! Most important here is to note the locations of the four sites . . . you should know what all of them are. Also note that you have a certain amount of control over them. Not much, but enough.

The final day begins with you tracking . . . yourself. Hmmmm. Not too good. What are you going to do about this? Well, now is the time for a nostalgic revisit to some places you've been to before, particularly to any places where not much went on before.

Don't worry about roaming the corridors (what corridors? That's for you to figure out! grin), you're *supposed* to be caught. This leads to the last (well, kinda sorta) of the arcade sequences in the game, something along the lines of Jumpman. There's lots of climbing and hopping around, so save often.

Before long, you should find yourself comfortably ensconced in an orb spacecraft. Why not save the game and fiddle with the controls to find out what they do? Then, in no time at all, you're on your way. Where? Well, there is a rather tedious maze to negotiate first.

After that, you should know where to go and what to do. I recommend starting with the one place you haven't been to, since after that you're going to have someone on your tail, thereby making your life difficult (or short, if you aren't careful). As you have no weapons, all



Walk the Streets Very Carefully

you can do is avoid the pursuing ship while you get on with the business at hand.

Success! Ummm . . . maybe yes, maybe no. The ending is in tune with rest of the game, namely twisted (heh). You'll just have to experience it for yourself.

In spite of the arcade sequences, this is a clever game that requires you to really look at the screen and remember what you see. Note-taking is helpful, in case you forget later on what you saw where (or even that you saw it). Nothing is pointed out to you directly, and there is no "look" command. Everything that's there is there in front of you on the screen. You just have to be sharp enough to see it and make the mental connections where necessary.

Well, I see by the old invisible clock it's about that time again. Remember, if you need help with an adventure game, you can reach me in the following ways:

On Delphi: Visit the GameSIG (under the Groups and Clubs menu). On GEnie: Stop by the Games RoundTable (type: Scorpia to reach the Games RT). On The Source: Send SMail to ST1030. By US Mail (Enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope if you live in the United States): Scorpia, PO Box 338, Gracie Station, New York, NY 10028.

Until next time, happy adventuring!

Mirror Images in a "Pool of Radiance"





TITLE:	Pool of Radiance
SYSTEMS:	C-64/128, IBM
# PLAYERS:	1
PRICE:	$39.95
DESIGNER:	Keith Brors
PUBLISHER:	Strategic Simulations, Inc. Mountain View, CA

Two expert adventurers have differing perceptions of SSI's Pool of Radiance.



Point

It's Only D & D, But I Like It!

by Ken St. Andre

Ken St. Andre is the designer of Tunnels & Trolls, *the pen and paper adventure game (soon to be a computer game), and was one of the designers of* Wasteland. *In this article, he tells us what he likes about another designer's game,* Pool of Radiance, *the first "Advanced Dungeons and Dragons" scenario from SSI.*

You're going to be outnumbered . . . all the time! You're going to face incredible odds, but you'll get to like it, even if those monsters fight hard and show no mercy! I've been spending every spare moment trying to clear the monster-infested slums of Phlan, somewhere in the "Forgotten Realms." It was hack and slash computer fantasy role-playing at its finest. I am beginning to see how the system works and I'd like to talk about the game from a design perspective. It may be predominantly one man's opinion, but it is, at least, an experienced opinion.

In 1975, I started the "revolt" against *Dungeons and Dragons* with my game, *Tunnels and Trolls*. My opinion, then and now, is that *D & D* is too complicated. With a simpler system, one can get to the essence of the fantasy role-playing experience more quickly and experience more adventures. In the years since 1975, *D & D* has metamorphosed into *Advanced Dungeons and Dragons* and a merely complex rules system has grown into a labyrinth of truly Byzantine perplexity. With my "less is more" fetish, you might think I'd hate **SSI**'s *A D & D* product, but you'd be wrong.

As far as I can tell, George MacDonald insisted that SSI faithfully incorporate an authentic *A D & D* system into *Pool of Radiance* (actually, I think they've fudged the system a bit in the player's favor, but it needed it). It's okay with me, though, for one simple reason. That is, the computer keeps track of all the rules and the player interface is beautifully transparent. That gives one the real feel of playing *Advanced Dungeons and Dragons* without needing to have all of the rulebooks close at hand. Frankly, this has proven irresistible to me.

Regardless of what rules system may be used, however, any game rises or falls on other factors. First of all, the game world must have internal consistency. Phlan, the environment where the game is played, has that. Of all the other CRPGs on the market, *Pool of Radiance* has about the best excuse for groups of people wandering around and killing monsters—They are reclaiming a city that had been lost to the forces of darkness centuries before. There is no world-threatening wizard to overcome—just a simple case of us against them.

Secondly, the game has to have repeatable elements that will keep the gamer's interest. Pool manages this with personally designed character icons that move during the combat scenes. Because I was able to choose what my little fighters, clerics, and wizards look like, I never get tired of seeing them on the screen.

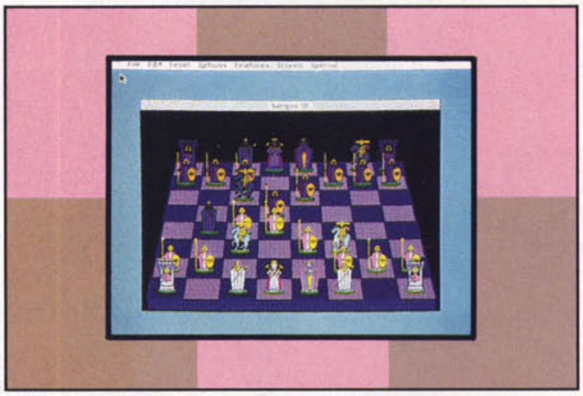
(Continued on page 60)


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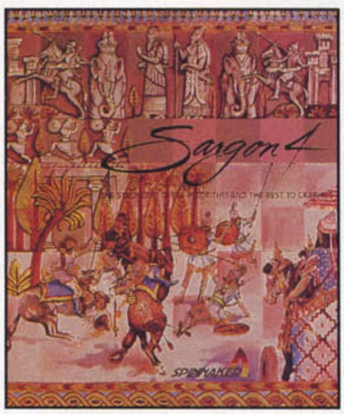
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Starglider II

by Frank Eva

As sequels go, they generally lose some of the flavor and excitement that was generated by their predecessors. Fortunately, this is not always the case in the software world. In the continuing evolution of three dimensional modelled graphics, **Rainbird Software** has continued to build upon the experience gained from *Starglider I* and its wire-framed vector objects by keeping pace with the present industry benchmark of color-filled vector generated objects.

The historical background of *Starglider II* takes up where its predecessor left off. It is your basic *Star Wars* premise, in which you, as the last hope of free civilization, must do battle with the overwhelming odds against you. You must attempt to push back the evil Egron empire and save Novenia and all other free worlds. The Egron war machine has devoured planet after planet in their quest for absolute domination. They must be stopped!



TITLE:	Starglider II
SYSTEM:	Amiga, Atari ST
# PLAYERS:	1
PRICE:	$44.95
PUBLISHER:	Rainbird Software Menlo Park, CA 94025

In Starglider I, the player was confined to the vicinity of the planet Novenia, his vehicle lacking the ability to leave the planet's atmosphere. In the sequel, it's possible, with the newly perfected "star drive", to leave Novenia and travel to other worlds. Possible, nay....necessary; for the Egrons are constructing powerful beam projectors on the seven moons of Millway, which will be used to protect a vast space station during its construction. It is this space station that will be turned against Novenia, unless it can be destroyed first. (Shades of the Death Star in *The Empire Strikes Back*!).

As previously mentioned, Starglider II features three dimensional modelled graphics. It also has a patterned, full perspective, scrolling landscape. This is also an enhancement of Starglider I, since the original provided no real landscape, whatsoever; merely objects scattered over a dark and dismal plain. However, should you find the patchwork landscape a distraction, there is a key function to disable it.

Has the use of three dimensional modelling been improved, over previous releases? Undeniably, yes! As an example, I point to the "walkers", reminiscent of those in the opening scenes of *Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back*. They move with a fluidity that has been heretofore unseen in computer games. Also, the use of color renders these animations more real and life-like than ever before.

New to Starglider graphics are the energy bolts that you can fire at your opponents; they are no longer mere lines drawn on the screen, and then erased. They are now actual objects, resembling elongated two dimensional diamonds.

The feeling of actual flight has also been improved. The land and space scapes are redrawn with such precision and speed, that Starglider could very easily be referred to as a "mini-flight simulator".

An ST with a single sided drive will not be able to access the excellent soundtrack and the digitized sound effects. Instead, computer generated sounds replace the very real crashes of stereo digitized thunderclaps, and explosions, etc. A nice addition to the Starglider package, specifically for ST single sided drive owners, is an audio cassette containing the musical score.

As is the case with most titles issuing from the United Kingdom, the documentation, complete as it may be, lacks the most important information: How to succeed at game play, the philosophy being that the player is expected to learn by trial and error. Other than the fact that no real hints are given on succeeding at Starglider II, the game has no real weak points! However, a few suggestions are in order, that may facilitate a more ideal method of play. First of all, even though there is optional joystick control, the use of the mouse is preferred. The basic problem here is the fact that most joysticks come with only one trigger button, or a combination of buttons that accomplish only one task. With new joysticks entering the game play market, perhaps we will someday see computer programs that remove the major drawback to the use of a joystick: the number of available functions is just too limited. Both joystick modes can be equally frustrating. The "one hand" mode forces the player to issue acceleration and deceleration commands in a method similar to firing weapons systems, and this can actually be damaging to game play. Whereas a quick tap of the fire button causes the current weapon to be fired, the player must remember to hold down the button and push the stick forward to increase speed, or backward to reduce speed. You may find yourself holding the button down too long when trying to fire your weapons and instead reducing or increasing your speed.

The other joystick mode forces the player to use the SPACEBAR to fire weapons! Now, if you happen to own a joystick that attaches to your work surface with suction cups, and provides a fire button on the control stick, this method will be a valuable option. However, if you don't, you will find the weapon firing sequence very awkward.

The best alternative is to use the mouse. Since this is already a one hand device, your other hand can be used to issue specialized commands from the keyboard. The mouse, with its standard two button configuration, is the perfect tool for flying the Icarus. You can bank left or right simply by moving the mouse in that direction. (A "mouse pad" will help to limit the desk space required). Also, changing altitude is accomplished by moving the mouse forward or back. And finally, changing speed is accomplished by holding down the right button, while simultaneously moving the mouse forward or back. The left mouse button fires the currently selected weapon.

In Starglider II, you must learn to control your speed. New attack patterns your enemies have devised will frequently leave you flying in circles, since some of them like to get you from the rear. So, slow down and analyze these patterns, thus saving energy.

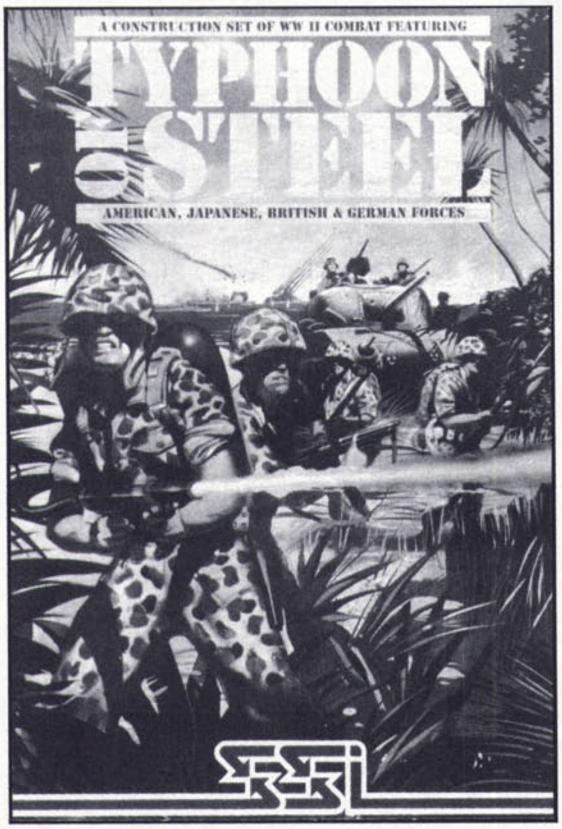
Who will like Starglider II? Certainly the arcade fan, for the realistic air and space combat, but also the ardent adventurer, for the exploration of some sixteen planets and moons making up the Solice System, the closest star cluster to the Novenian system. Since this includes most computer game players, I would imagine that the only person who would not enjoy Starglider II is one who likes only text adventures! Starglider II is a good buy!

Banzai Strike Line

Pacific Theater Combat in "Typhoon of Steel"

by M. Evan Brooks

Typhoon of Steel is **SSI**'s Pacific Theater sequel to *Panzer Strike* (cf. *CGW*, May 1988, No. 47, p. 22). While *Typhoon of Steel* is a stand-alone simulation, its mechanics and options are such that it is the Pacific mirror of *Panzer Strike* that so many gamers have wanted. Here, one may utilize the Americans, the Japanese, and of course, the British and the Germans. Climates of conflict include the Pacific Theater, Asia and Europe. While the author of the Panzer Strike review (see above) noted that the system had become his favorite World War II tactical simulation, this "curmudgeonly critic" will note some other considerations.



NAME:	Typhoon of Steel
SYSTEM:	C-64/128, Apple
# PLAYERS:	1-2
PRICE:	$49.95
DESIGNER:	Gary Grigsby
PUBLISHER:	Strategic Simulations, Inc. Mountain View, CA

The Philosophy of the Tactical Wargame

As each unit represents a squad or an individual vehicle, abstraction, as such, is no longer a valid consideration. Generally, military simulations are accurate insofar as they reflect the mass, i.e. one can predict what 10,000 men will do in the aggregate (a division). It is much more difficult to predict what 10 men (a squad) will do.

However, tactical games have always been popular, e.g. the boardgame, *Squad Leader* and its descendants, advanced squad leader (no longer a game, but rather a way of life). As long as the consumer realizes the inherent difficulty of predicting actions on so detailed a level, there is nothing wrong with such simulations.

Typhoon of Steel: The Advantages

(1) Design-Your-Own Scenarios. This feature is easily utilized; in fact, the map maker and unit designations are among the easiest available on the market (although one is restricted to the unit mix and terrain types included in the program data [which are numerous and varied]), cf. Tables 1 and 2.

(2) Command Emphasis. One may play with limited or full communications. The former emphasizes the reality of World War II combat operations and the limitations of the chain of command. Such usage may prove frustrating, but it does give a more accurate understanding of the difficulties of conflict at the lower levels of command.

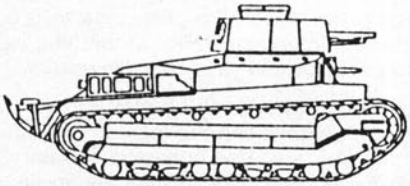
(3) The Campaign Game. One may take a battalion-sized or smaller force through World War II. Updating weapons, efficiencies and morale will show the effects as early losses can escalate into brittle units suffering from "combat fatigue" (or "malingering", as General Patton would say).

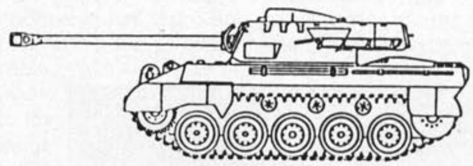
Typhoon of Steel: The Disadvantages

(1) TIME! The game is not a quick play. In a battalion-sized engagement (c. 32 squads per side), to play one hour of "combat" time takes around 15 hours with the computer playing both sides. If a human is playing against the machine, time can easily stretch to 30-45 hours. The pulses are simply too slow in their execution for a tactical simulation.

Scenarios can be designed for play in 15 minutes. However, they would have to be of a skirmish at company-level. The program mandates a game-length of 30 or 60 turns. Therefore, only a lower unit density scenario would allow play to be completed within a short time period (as soon as the crisis point has been reached, one can choose to end the game and the computer will declare the victor).

This reviewer can conceptualize operational goals in a simulation over a long period. However, with a product simulating a one-hour maximum, it becomes quite difficult





to remember after a number of saves as to which ridge line or pillbox was the prime objective.

(2) Terrain Types. A plethora of terrain types exist for one's usage. However, nowhere in the documentation is there any pictorial representation of such types. The documentation strongly urges the user to go through the design parameters in order to become familiar with the terrain types, but this reviewer does not think that a pictorial representation of such types would have required an inordinate effort. Even more confusing is that certain terrain types are the same!—e.g. Pacific wheat (level 3) and high grass (level 1), Pacific clear terrain (levels 1 or 3) or stone buildings (levels 1 or 3). While a map recon may well serve to delineate the type of objective, it becomes difficult to remember them in the aggregate.

(3) Order of Battle. Nowhere in the scenario explanation is an order of battle given. While this may have been done in order to have one experience the incomplete intelligence as to the enemy, this reviewer would have preferred to have an order of battle. It would have greatly assisted in deciding how to tailor one's forces in order to maximize command emphasis.

(4) The Military Misconceptions. One may choose to advance his units, e.g. across an open area to a building. However, once the units are spotted or fired upon, they immediately slow to a cautious advance and are often rendered *hors de combat*. While this may *occasionally* be true in actual combat, it is idiocy to seek cover in an open area instead of rushing into a region offering both cover and concealment.

Terrain is defined in terms of "cover." In military parlance, terrain offers "cover" and/or "concealment." Concealment simply reduces one's visibility; cover offers protection from enemy fire. Since even wheat fields offer "cover" in *Typhoon of Steel*, this apparently represents concealment rather than cover and should be noted as such.

(5) Non-Interchangeability: *Typhoon of Steel* may not be readily mixed with *Panzer Strike*. Thus, one cannot mix Russians with Japanese in a replay of Khalkin-Gol (the 1937 divisional-level battles wherein the Japanese were repulsed by General Zhukov's Far Eastern Command).

Random Observations

(1) HISTORICITY: **SSI** has done an admirable job of detailing unit weapons and vehicles down to squad level. *Typhoon of Steel* utilizes 50 yards per hex with 20-second phases and 1 minute turns at the squad level. By comparison, *Kampfgruppe* utilized 200 yards per hex with 30-second phases and 2 minute turns at the platoon level. Weapon ranges from both games are generally comparable (e.g. *Typhoon/Kampfgruppe* rifle, 500/400; SMG, 300/200; HMG, 900/1000; PZIV-G, 2500/2400 yards). As ranges increase, lethality decreases in an algorithm available in the documentation for the true grognard.

TABLE 1:

Nationality	Vehicles	Guns	Infantry
German	47	16	8
American	36	17	12
Japanese	13	14	5
British Commonwealth	39	12	5

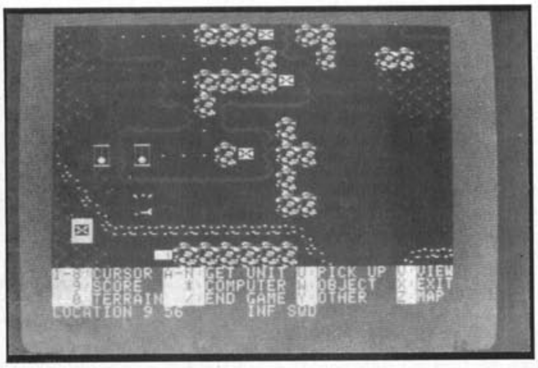
TABLE 2:

Typhoon of Steel Scenarios	Map	Scenario Missions
Pacific		
Kakazu Ridge	60x60	Clear-Hold
Iwo Jima	60x60	Clear-Engage
European		
Bocage Waltz	60x60	Clear-Hold
Omaha Beach	60x60	Bypass-Engage
Peiper on Pt	60x60	Hold-Bypass
Asian		
Kohima	60x60	Hold-Clear
Kampar	60x60	Hold-Engage

On a higher level, however, historicity does not appear to be totally accurate. For example, the Omaha Beach scenario postulates a landing by the 116th infantry assault regiment. The scenario postulates a landing by 8 Sherman DD tanks. Historically, by H+5, there were 16 tanks available. On Dog White Beach, only 8 got ashore. Thus, if one utilizes an Order of Battle for H+60, the scenario would reflect Company G. Yet, the number of squads available in the game does not correlate with Company G's historically available manpower (cf. Omaha Beachhead, Center of Military History, 1984, pp. 44-57). Granted that liberties may be taken with the OB, it would have been nice to have a little more explanation as to the who, what, where and how of the scenarios.

(2) Map Recon: a detailed map walk-through is a must in order to succeed at *Typhoon of Steel*. It would have been nice to have a hard copy option available. At the squad levels herein, it is incumbent on the commanders to establish "kill zones" and for squad positions to establish "fields of fire" and interlocking firepower schematas. In order to do this, a hard copy map would have been of inestimable value. Also, it would assist in the playing of a scenario, since one could note the axis of advance and the intermediate objectives and phase lines on the offensive. This would prevent the user from becoming bogged down in a visual information overload.

(3) Command Control. Command control is essential. As the senior commander, one must insure survival and communications (remember, Move-Shoot-Communicate—the elements of success). If a subordinate commander is killed, the computer takes over such a formation. If the senior level commander is killed (e.g. unit A0), the simulation is now bereft of the user's input. He has been killed! So, take appropriate precautions and stay alive!



(4) Firepower: Determining the optimum tactics can be a frustrating experience. This reviewer has reservations concerning certain gun ratings, e.g. a 16" gun has a penetration rating of zero. Well, a direct hit by a naval 16" gun on even a heavily armored vehicle would ruin the crew's whole day.

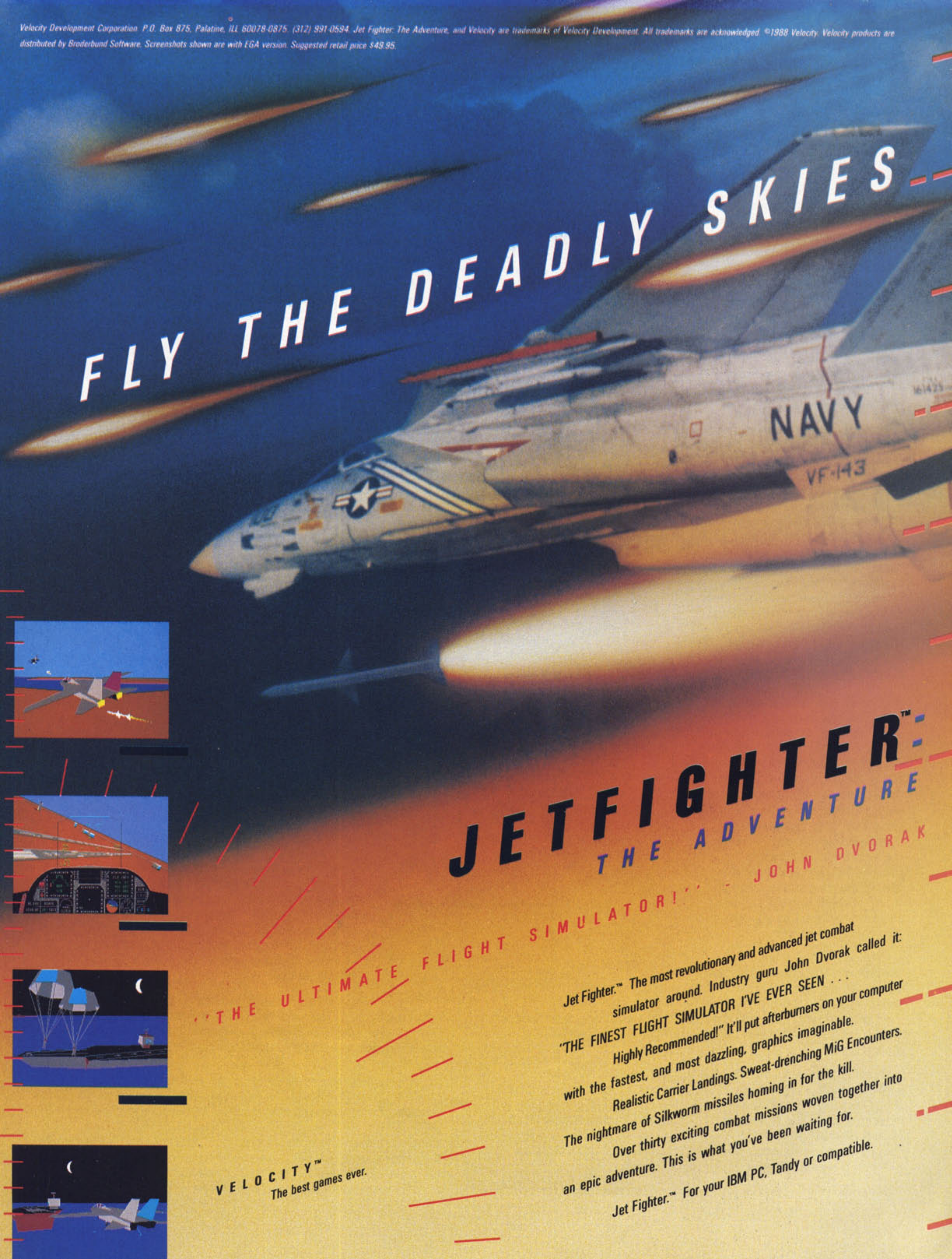
Combined arms tactics are essential. Therefore, one should practice using artillery and naval gunfire in order to optimize such usage. Given the pulse system, it is difficult to get the armor and infantry to move in tandem; but judicious use of indirect fires should yield effective results.

In the latest issue of *Inside SSI* (Vol. II, No. 2), a game replay is offered. Lessons learned include: protection of leaders and MG sections, unit cohesion and durability of American Marine squads vis-a-vis their Japanese counterparts.

In fact, the Japanese offer an interesting study. Rather than suffer rout, they "banzai" when faced with heavy losses and extreme suppression (similar to the "Mad Russian" syndrome so familiar to the *Squad Leader* aficionado). This "tactic" makes them ideal for the novice gamer. Of course, the American should seek to use massive indirect fires to effect this state and then destroy them with small arms fire from squads taking advantage of both cover and concealment.

Conclusions

For the casual user, *Typhoon of Steel* may well offer only a "Storm of Indecision." However, for the dedicated gamer, *Typhoon of Steel* offers an engaging, albeit time-consuming, study of small unit actions during World War II in the South Pacific. This should not be surprising, given the game's roots in the *Panzer Strike* system which was awarded Strategy Game of the Year (see last issue).



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Magical, Mystery Future

Electronic Arts Conjures "Future Magic"

by Scorpia

Deep in the dark reaches of space lies the Caldorre system. Ordinarily peaceful, it is now wracked with horrendous difficulties. As though from nowhere, mysterious raider ships appear and attack cargo vessels. They ask no quarter and they give none. They come not to steal, but to destroy; and they destroy very well indeed. To combat the menace, the Federation dispatches a squadron of interceptor ships to seek out the raiders and protect shipping. Yet, there is more here than mere raiding, much more . . .

Sentinel Worlds I: Future Magic is built around the efforts of an Interceptor team to discover who or what is behind the transport raids. Aside from finding that out, the team must also end a dispute between two native cultures on Caldorre, as well as stop a raging fight between the farmers and the ranchers on Norjaenn. In between, they have to earn money to keep their ship in fuel and themselves supplied with ammunition and training funds.



TITLE:	Sentinel Worlds I: Future Magic
SYSTEM:	IBM
# PLAYERS:	1
PRICE:	$49.95
DESIGNERS:	Karl Buiter
PUBLISHER:	Electronic Arts San Mateo, CA

Recruitment

All in all, a lot to do, although it's taken one step at a time. The first order of business is to create the Interceptor team of five. Each member of the team has a specific function: Medic (heals people), Navigator (plots ship courses), Computer Officer (works on ship programming), Engineer (repairs any damage the ship takes), and Pilot (moves the ship and operates the weaponry in ship combat). If any of these should die, they must be replaced as no one else can do their job.

There is a pre-set team that comes with the game. You can use those or "reroll" if you prefer. Actually, there is no "rolling." Instead, you get 70 points to distribute among 5 attributes, with a minimum of 10 and a maximum of 20 per attribute at the start.

At first glance, you might think the pre-created team seems well-balanced. However, this turns out not to be the case. One thing (among several) that the manual doesn't tell you is just how important it is to have a high rating in Comprehend (think of that as intelligence). Each time a character receives a promotion to a new rank, he or she gets a number of skill points to put into a variety of skills (there are 14 in all).

Naturally, putting points into a skill makes the character better at that skill. Nevertheless, the number of points a character gets is governed by Comprehend. Those with low Comprehend will get only one or two points, while a Comprehend of 20 will give four points.

With that in mind, it's best to scrap the entire beginning team and start over, giving everyone a 20 in Comprehend. They will advance faster in the skills that are most important. These tend to be combat skills, such as using projectile and hand weapons. I recommend putting the points into projectile at first, and doing edged and contact weapons later on, with blaster not being built up until late in the game.

Also, put a point into Recon for each character until the cumulative score is at least 16. The sooner you do this, the better off you'll be, as recon is very helpful for finding armories and other places in the game.

Dexterity is also important. How quickly a weapon can be used in combat is governed by this attribute. Each time a weapon is used, whether an "up close" weapon such as a dagger, or a long range weapon, such as a shotgun, there is a period of time when the weapon is "not ready". The more dexterous the character is, the shorter the waiting period before the weapon is ready to use again.

Stamina controls how many additional hit points a character gets when he or she advances a level. Also, in conjunction with strength, it determines the initial number of hit points a character has (the two are added together). Further, note that increasing stamina after the start of the game will also increase hit points. That is, for each point of increase in stamina, there will be a one point increase in hit points as well.

Strength is a factor when using close range weapons such as daggers or energy blades; it adds to the damage the weapon does. It is also used, as mentioned above, in determining a character's starting hit points.

Charisma is pretty much your looks and charm. While it's supposed to help you when talking to people, I didn't find much difference in their responses even with a character of Charisma 20.

While I'm sure the authors didn't plan it that way, it seems the best approach to creating a team is to give them all the same values in all the attributes. When it seemed to me that the original team was advancing too slowly, especially those with low

Comprehend, I started over again, scrapping the originals and making my own.

Everyone had a Comprehend of 20, Dexterity of 15, Stamina 14, Strength 11 and Charisma 10. These worked much better than the originals. The characters went up faster in the skills that are important at the start, and as the game progressed, training raised the other attributes.

Improvement

I concentrated on getting everyone's Dexterity up to 20 as soon as possible, since weapon use is almost instantaneous at that level and this can be a lifesaver in some circumstances. It also allows the Medic to heal people much more quickly, which can also be a lifesaver.



This training, by the way, is available in the Caldorre Towers. There are three of them and they are all pretty much alike. They all have the same facilities, only on different levels. You'll have to go through each tower to find the various spas, as they're called (there is one spa for each attribute in each tower, or five spas per tower). Training costs 1000 credits, and raises the relevant attribute by one point. A character can train once for each level he or she has attained.



One thing the manual doesn't mention and you may not find out for yourself is how to set the Medic to help a specific person in the team. This person should be the team leader, since the leader is always up front, and therefore will be the target 90% of the time. By setting the Medic on the leader (or anyone else) you enable healing during combat. Any injury sustained by the character will be restored as it happens. You won't have to wait until fighting ends to order the Medic to do healing. How fast this healing occurs depends on the dexterity of the Medic, another reason to get the Medic's dexterity up as quickly as possible. Of course, after a combat you can have the Medic heal anyone else who was injured; just remember to set the Medic back on the leader when everyone else is fixed up.

Disparagement

The game does have drawbacks. The worst of these is the very slow movement when the team is indoors, and long, journeys in the ATV (All Terrain Vehicle) outdoors. The view for movement is always overhead. Indoors, your team shows up individually as dots, green for the team leader and yellow for the rest. Other people (and animals) are also dots, either blue (friendly) or red (hostile). When the team leader moves, the rest of the team moves, following behind in single file. This movement is slow.

This situation is exacerbated by the necessity for making long trips on foot, such as the five levels of the volcano, the three levels of the battle station, and the towers on Caldorre, to name a few. Getting *anywhere* seems to take forever.

Travel by ATV is not much better. It's a little faster, but on several occasions you have to follow a long, long trench to get to some special place. The need for such long journeys escapes me. There are no outdoor dangers at all. Nothing will attack you when you're tooling around in the ATV. The only use I could find for the laser turret was to blast some hapless animal out of my way so I could go on, assuming there was no other way around it.

Combat also has its frustrations. The team leader is the only one you control directly; the rest of the team fires independently. This is actually a very nice feature, saving you the time and trouble of directing everyone's shooting. Where it breaks down, however, is in the fact that the team members don't ever move independently.

Consider the use of doors, for instance. When the leader moves through a door, it closes automatically again. If he runs into something on the other side of the door, he has to fight it alone, since the person behind him isn't smart enough to open the door so the rest of the team can help and he may not have time to turn himself around to open the door himself. Also, in some corridors or rooms, team members may end up stuck in a corner and unable to shoot at anything, even though there would be room for them *if* they would just move a little bit.

The manual is not one of the better ones. Aside from omitting certain information you really should know (as mentioned above), there is no table of contents, making it hard to find specific information without a lot of page flipping. Also, reading it the first time (or even second) can be confusing without having experienced some of the game first.

Encouragement

On the positive side, the graphics are absolutely gorgeous. The pictures of people, places, and animals are outstanding. The coordination of events on multiple screens is fantastic, especially the orbit/landing sequences, where the event is shown on three screens at once with each displaying different views. This is the most exceptional use of EGA graphics I've seen yet in an adventure game.

Music and sound effects are also surprisingly good, but they were too loud on my speaker (oh, for a volume control!), and I played the game with them turned off. On the other hand, if you're not up in the wee hours like I am, you might want to have them on. They're pretty jazzy.

Judgment

Overall, Sentinel Worlds is a series (a second game is mentioned at the end) that shows promise, although the defects in this game need to be addressed in future adventures. Faster movement is a definite necessity. So is a better coordination of plot elements; too much of what happens in Future Magic is on a linear basis, which makes the early part slow going, particularly as the player has no idea of what's going on.

Bottom line: Mixed reactions on this one; recommended, but patience is required.

Supplement

Warning: This section contains specific hints for playing "Sentinel Worlds I" and should be avoided by readers who do not want to utilize Scorpia's clues to solve the puzzles.

(Continued on page 53)

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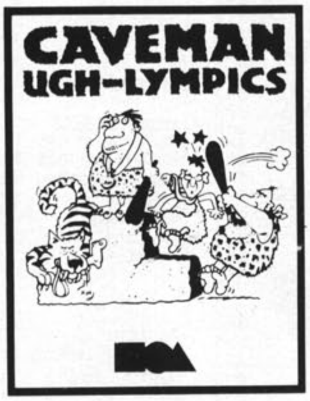
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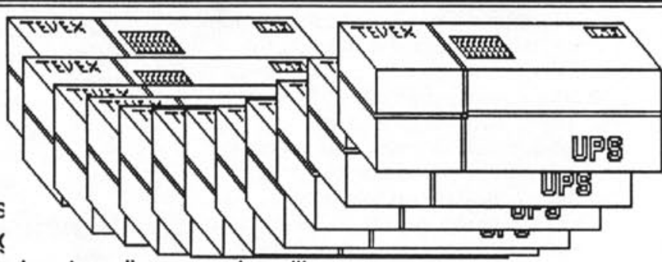
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Avoiding "The Longest Day"

Strategic Notes for SSG's "Battles In Normandy"

by Joe Sherfy

[Ed: In June of 1984, the author had the pleasure of attending the fortieth anniversary of the Allied landings in Normandy. As a result, the history of that campaign has been of especial interest to Mr. Sherfy. So, when Strategic Studies Group released Battles in Normandy, he purchased a copy in order to get a "hands on" appreciation of what the commanders of forty years ago were confronted with. These notes are the result of his successes with the Battlefront *system utilized in this game and other popular SSG games.]*

Optimal Deployment

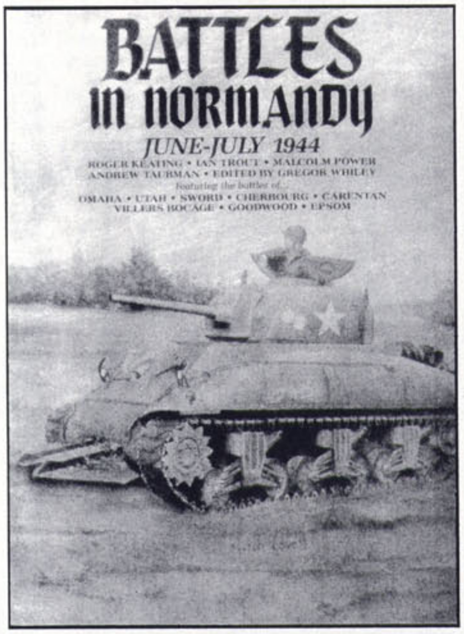
Prior to ordering troops off their landing barges (as the Allies) or into their coastal fortifications (as the Axis), take a careful look at both the objectives and the forces available. Access the information from the "Create" submenu and look at the information for the scenario, all of which would naturally be available to a given commander. Write down the data concerning friendly troops, including their strength, rating, and range of their primary weapons. It can be very useful, for example, to know that a specific artillery unit can hit a target five squares away. Knowing this, one can more effectively utilize the artillery included in a division's assets. If an artillery unit is too far away to assist in an attack with its current regiment, it can be reassigned to another regiment in the division for purposes of the current turn.

Maximal Play Value

Next, check the victory points awarded to each player for the elimination of friendly and enemy units. This helps commanders decide who has an advantage in a war of attrition. Also, though it may not be as realistic, it enhances play value to know the enemy's objectives. In some of the scenarios, the Axis and Allies have different objectives. It can be very frustrating to be next to an enemy objective hex at the conclusion of a scenario, be unaware of this objective, and end up losing the scenario by only a few points.

In one playing of the Utah Beach scenario, the Allies swept completely around the German's right flank and took all of the objectives on the other side of the Cotentin Peninsula (Portbail, Carteret, Barnville). The Allied commander still lost the game, however, because he did not realize that he was within a few hexes of a German objective (Briquebec), which lay well within his grasp.

This does bring up a problem, though. Assume that the Allied commander



wants to take a German objective which is unoccupied. Since the Allied commander cannot order his units into an objective not specified by the scenario, the system works against said commander and the German gets victory points for an unoccupied town that could easily have been taken by the Allies had the game system allowed him to move into it. Therefore, it is recommended that when a player does his pregame survey of enemy objectives, he alter the scenario so that any additional objectives are added to the list of friendly objectives. No victory points should be awarded for their capture, however, because the reward is simply keeping the enemy from gaining those points.

Exceptional Management

Paying close attention to the terrain is one of the keys to success. For example, the Sword Beach scenario is one of the harder ones for the Allied commanders because the Allies have so little room to move. The first concern for these forces must be to expand the beachhead in order to allow more troops ashore. Should the Allied commander have difficulty cracking the German position on the hills by Beauville, he should assign the 4th Regiment of the 6th Airborne Division to assault this position. This regiment is comprised solely of infantry. Checking the terrain chart reveals that infantry is best suited for attacking this position. It is surprising how many players use troops that are at a disadvantage to attack this position, specifically armor.

Another vital point is checking one's divisional assets each and every turn and deciding where they can be used to the greatest effect. When units have taken a lot of casualties, be certain to pull them out of the line and put them in reserve. In the Omaha Beach scenario, Allied commanders should be careful not to let their armor get chewed up by the Germans in their forts. Instead, the armor should be saved for when they break out of the beachhead and are attacking in the open. Careful commanders can reassign their divisional armor to non-attacking regiments until the "breakout" occurs or simply hold them in reserve while the "slugout" on the beaches is proceeding.

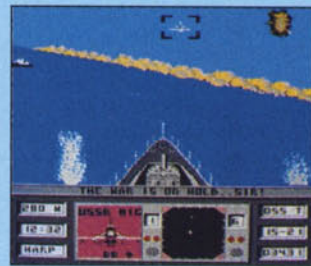
"Supporting formations" are extremely crucial to success. When attacking, observe how many enemy formations the enemy has within supporting range (generally two hexes). If there are quite a few, it is usually better to "probe" his defenses prior to launching an all out assault. When attacking a battalion which does not have any supporting troops in range, however, it is usually worth gambling on an "assault" before he can bring up reinforcements.

Beneficial Creativity

Creating personalized scenarios gives one considerable insight on playing the game. This reviewer has developed a scenario of the United States troops landing on Sicily which has provided considerably more understanding of the game system. Those who would like to have a copy of the Invasion of Sicily scenario should send a self-addressed stamped envelope to: Joe Sherfy, 1201 W. 24th #204, Austin, TX 78705. Finally, Allied commanders should not forget to order some *Calvados* for General Sherfy at the first cafe they liberate!

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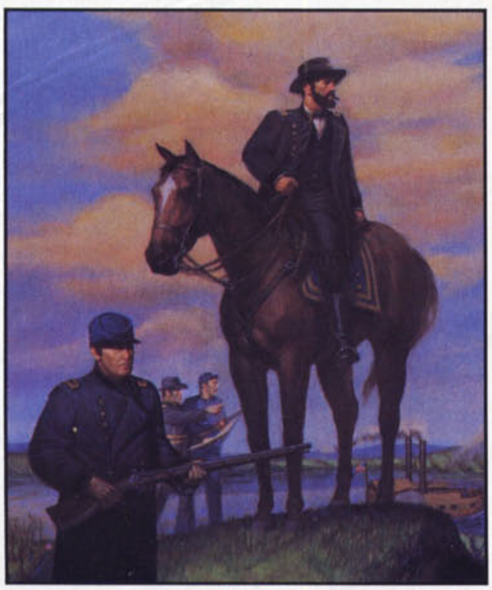
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ACTIVISION.

The Role of Leaders in SSI's Civil War Series

by Major David S. Stevens





Major Stevens is currently on active duty with the United States Army. He has submitted this article based primarily on Rebel Charge at Chickamauga and Shiloh, but notes that the earlier games dealing with Antietam and Gettysburg are similar enough to be relevant to this discussion, as well.

Premise

During the Civil War, leaders played an extremely important role on the battle field. Their individual abilities could often make the difference between victory and defeat. A leader's presence and active involvement at a critical point in the battle could prevent a unit from fleeing in panic or inspire one to perform feats of heroism. Corps commanders were also known to have personally directed their divisions into battle. This, of course, sometimes lead to their untimely deaths. General John F. Reynolds, the senior officer on the battlefield during the first morning of fighting at Gettysburg, was killed while directing units of his I Corps. No one can predict what might have happened at Gettysburg had he not been killed. Likewise, General Winfield S. Hancock, taking over for Reynolds several hours later, had a profound and immediate effect on the morale of his previously disheartened soldiers. There are many accounts of how his presence renewed the fighting spirit in his men and restored their confidence and their belief in the Army's ability to carry the day.

In **SSI**'s Civil War series, the effect that leaders actually had on their units is simulated very effectively and realistically. However, understanding the intricacies of this complex game feature is not easy. The documentation is not as helpful in this area as one would generally like. To obtain a victory in these games, one must effectively command his units. In order to accomplish this, one must master the essential leadership concepts of the game.

Unit Modifiers in Combat

Before attempting to describe the role of a leader, one must understand the mechanics of combat in this game system. There are several things that determine the combat capability of a unit. First and simplest is a unit's "strength" in terms of men. A unit with 1,000 men would theoretically be twice as strong as a unit with 500 men. Next, representing the experience and training of a unit is the measurement termed "effectiveness." For example, a unit with 1,000 men may have an effectiveness rating of 80/80 at the start of the game, which could drop to 70/80 after suffering losses during the game. In this case, the 70 indicates the current effectiveness, while the 80 indicates the maximum effectiveness this unit can have. In this game, the overall strength of the unit is reduced by one percent for each two effectiveness points below 100. Thus, a unit with 1,000 men would begin the game as if it were fighting with a

(Continued on page 47)

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(Continued from page 44)

The Role of Leaders in SSI's Civil War Series

strength of only 900 (1,000 * .90, a 10% reduction computed by (100-80)/2).

Fatigue also modifies the combat effectiveness of a unit. As a unit moves and fights, it becomes tired. For every two fatigue points a unit accumulates, its strength is modified by one percentage point. Thus, if a hypothetical unit of 1,000 men with an 80/80 effectiveness rating had 10 fatigue points, its combat strength would now be equal to just 855 men (1,000 * .90 * .95). Note that all modifiers are cumulative. Thus, in this example, the unit's strength of 1,000 men was multiplied by .90 for being 20 effectiveness points under 100 and .95 for having 10 fatigue points.

Other modifiers are also considered when determining the fire power of a unit. These include the type of terrain in which both the attacker and the defender are located, the density of the attacker and defender, and whether the attacker or defender is in a column mode. Terrain and column modifiers are common sense concepts. For example, on would like to attack on opposing force that is located in the open while one's own force is located in covered terrain, as opposed to making an assault across an open field against a fortified position in the wood line. Tables are provided in the rules which list the modifiers for the myriad of combinations possible.

Command Influence in Combat

As the commander of an army, you can control the above modifiers relatively easily by simply using common sense. Two other modifiers also affect the unit's strength and they must be monitored just as closely, if not more so. They are the "Command and Control" rating assigned to each unit and the "Leader Bonus."

In these games, a leader is assigned to each brigade, division, and corps. Brigades can be split into demi-brigades with the assumption that a brigade leader affects both units equally. Several brigades are grouped together to form a division and several divisions are grouped to form a corps. This hierarchical structure forms the chain of command. Each leader in this chain of command affects all units under him.

Each leader has been assigned a bonus or proficiency rating representing his historical leadership ability. In *Shiloh*, this value ranges from a low of "4" to a high of "50" (the latter is the rating assigned to General Grant). The leader bonus is a direct modifier on the strength of the unit. Thus, if Grant is attached to a unit of 1,000 men, it will, in effect, assault or defend with 1,500 men (1,000 * 1.5). Of course, the other modifiers mentioned above would also affect the unit's final strength.

The "Command and Control" modifier is also a direct modifier. It can assume a value between 0.5 and 1.5, which can increase or reduce a unit's strength by 50%. Several factors go into determining this rating. They are: the distance a unit is from its brigade or demi-brigade, the distance the unit is from both its division and corps leader, and the state of mind value of both its division and corps leader.

At the beginning of each turn, all division and corps leaders are randomly assigned a state of mind as being either confused, indecisive, cautious, or confident. Values of -0.3, -0.2, -0.1, and 0 are appropriately assigned for each state of mind. The leader's bonus rating is used to increase the probability that the leader's state will be confident. Thus, the higher the bonus rating, the less chance there is that the leader will become confused.

A "Command and Control" modifier is determined for each individual unit at the beginning of each turn. It represents the commander's influence over a unit. This modifier is primarily based on how far away the unit is located from the leaders in its chain of command. In *Rebel Charge at Chickamauga*, for instance, five points are accumulated for every square that the unit is away from its other demi-brigade (if divided). Five points are also accumulated for each square the unit is away from its division leader. For each square a unit is away from its corps leader, two points are accumulated (Note: These values vary slightly depending on the particular game). The resulting total is divided into 28. The results will be rounded up or down to insure that they are between 0.5 and 1.5. This quantity is further reduced by adding in the state of mind values for both the division and corps

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leader, with the lowest possible result again being limited to 0.5.

What this all means is that each brigade should stay in close proximity to their respective division leader, three or four squares away at the most, and the corps leaders should be positioned near the center of the units he commands or near key points of action. It also means that leaders with high bonus ratings should not exposed needlessly to combat. As stated above, a leader with a high rating has less of a chance of becoming confused and a confused leader will greatly reduce all of his subordinate units' ability to move and fight effectively. For example, a unit obtaining the maximum value of 1.5 for distance factors can still end up with a command and control modifier of 0.9, should both its division and corps leaders be confused. Thus, one should not casually involve division, and especially, corps leaders that have high ratings; in combat. The loss of a highly qualified corps leader will have numerous and severe negative effects on the corps' ability to function effectively for the remainder of the game. Finally, before sending a unit into combat, one should also consider how the "Command and Control" rating will affect the unit's strength in conjunction with other modifiers.

Other Effects Related to Leadership

In order to perform any operation such as moving, firing, engaging in a melee, building fortifications, or changing modes, a unit must have the appropriate number of operational points. The more operation points a unit has, the more it can accomplish in one turn. The number of operation points a unit is allocated each turn is based on the "Command and Control" rating in conjunction with the unit's morale and a random number. Thus, the "Command and Control" rating directly affects not only the unit's combat strength, but its ability to function effectively on the battlefield.

Each time a unit engages in combat, whether in the offensive or defensive mode, it expends one of its ammo points. At the beginning of each turn, the unit is resupplied. Again, the higher the "Command and Control" rating assigned to the unit, the higher the probability that the unit will be resupplied. A unit without ammo cannot attack and defends with a 70% reduction.

A unit that is disrupted or routed cannot attack and is, in effect, useless. The ability of a unit to recover from disruption is based on the "Command and Control" rating and whether the unit is in an enemy zone of control. Rallying a routed unit is likewise based on the "Command and Control" rating, as well as its morale. In both cases, it is clear that the rating has a significant and important role toward influencing the play of the game. Here, the higher the rating is, the better the chance for that unit to return to service.

Using Leaders Effectively

As explained above, insuring that leaders maintain control of their units is the key to obtaining higher "Command and Control" ratings. These higher ratings, in turn, affect practically every aspect of the game and it can severely impede one's progress toward total victory if they are not taken into consideration.

The added firepower, in terms of increased unit strength, which is obtained whenever division and corps leaders are included in an assault, makes including them in combat whenever possible a tempting strategy to follow. While this tactic can sometimes cause the additional casualties needed to disrupt or rout an enemy unit, the down side of this strategy is that the leader is constantly being exposed to fire and thus, runs the risk of being killed or captured. Every time the unit to which a leader is attached takes casualties, a probability check is made to see if the leader was one of those killed or wounded. The elimination of a key corps or division leader, as stated above, can reduce the combat effectiveness of many units for the remainder of the game.

I have found that it is not wise to split up the brigade to which a division or corps leader is attached. This reduces the possibility that a key leader will be killed during combat. I use units with division leaders assigned to attack enemy forces that are known to be weaker and where the possibility of being outflanked is small. I also try not to attack with units that have corps leaders assigned to them, unless a flank attack presents itself and I can protect that unit from a major counterattack by utilizing friendly units which are nearby.

SSI has done an excellent job at simulating the effects that leaders had on their units during that era. they have also captured the feeling for the difficulty that the generals must have experienced attempting to command and control their units in combat. In the final analysis, these games test one's own ability as an Army commander to the limit.

Decisive Battles of the American Civil War

Volume Two: Gaines Mill to Chattanooga

by Jay C. Selover

The period from mid-1862 through the end of 1863 saw the tide slowly changing in the American Civil War. Especially in the eastern theater, Union forces began to give as well as they got. Were Union tactics improving? Were Union troops improving in quality? Or was the balance in the "on-the-field generalship" changing? **SSG**'s latest offering, *Decisive Battles of the American Civil War, Volume II* (DBACW-II) is your opportunity to explore the last question in particular. In keeping with their tradition of designs with "viewpoints," the latest puts the player onto the battlefield as the actual commanding general. It is a highly accurate and historical simulation, as well as a product which raises some interesting questions about the true role of the overall commander in the midst of battle.

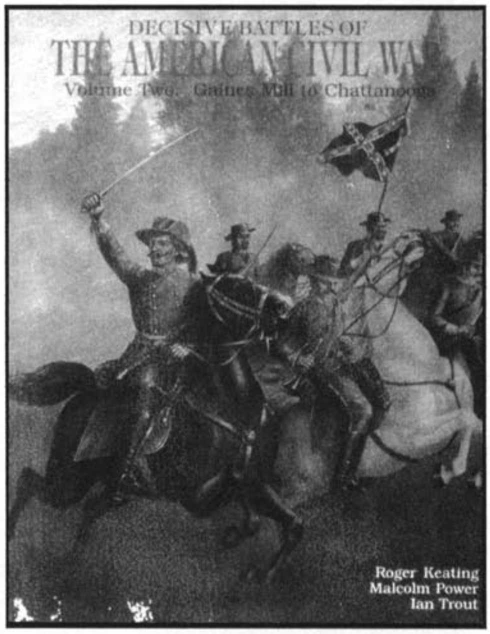
Boilerplate Special

DBACW-II is SSG's second offering in their series of American Civil War titles, with this game covering five battles from mid-1862 through the end of 1863. The scenarios cover the battles of Gaines Mill, Stones River, Gettysburg (scenarios for Day One and Day Two), Chickamauga, and Chattanooga.

The game uses brigades as the units of maneuver, and one hour turns. The system uses an "orders phase" at the start of each turn, where players can check the status of their army and issue orders to particular units and formations. Next, the computer resolves combat and moves all units. As usual, SSG gets high marks for laying bare the guts of the combat routines, so that you can get a feel for which factors have significantly greater or lesser impacts in combat.

The game system places great emphasis on the maintenance of a proper command perspective for the player (another signature mark of SSG games). You play each scenario as the battlefield commander and the decisions made each turn are relevant to that position. You send orders to subordinate formations (corps and divisions), and can personally direct the actions of a limited number of actual brigades. Orders to corps and Divisional commanders will be received (or perhaps not), interpreted, and acted upon by the subordinate commanders (played by the computer), and may or may not work out the way you planned. The possible orders which you can give to various subordinate formations (corps and divisions) and units (brigades) will vary with the individual situations. Formations receive orders to adopt offensive or defensive attitudes and map objectives. Individual units can, on the other hand, generally be given more specific directions. Command control, sighting, and communications are all handled by the computer; and these are what decide how many of your formations and units are able to receive orders from you each turn.

While the player typically maintains contact with most of his formation leaders and directs the specific actions of a few nearby brigades, one other command option exists. You can move your Army HQ adjacent to a specific corps HQ and take personal command of that corps (sometimes you simply must do this to keep some dunderheaded commander from completely messing up the battle). Of course, while you are so engaged, you can usually watch as things go completely off course all over the rest of the battlefield! All in all, the frustration and exasperation level is quite high as you begin to realize how much of your Army's potential remains underutilized because you can't assume the classic gamer's perspective and move all the brigades together in a concerted effort.



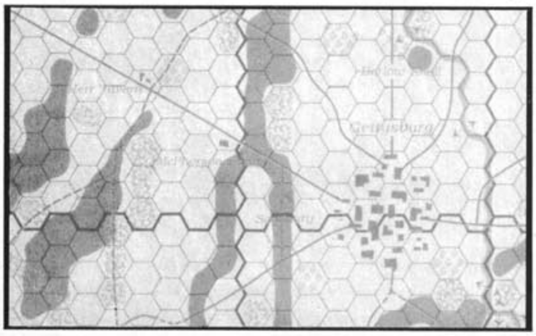
Aye, There's The Rub!

So, the game effectively transmits the frustration of true command—isn't that the whole idea of a game designed with a "command perspective?" Right, well I guess my basic problem with the game then is that it was basically no fun being a Civil War battlefield commander, so it's no fun playing the role of one! Every scenario starts out with starting units in position and with initial orders given (more on this crucial point anon). You plop down out of the sky into Meade's boots and spend the whole game trying like hell to make your presence have an impact on the battle. The boys already know what to do, and there are just too many of them for you to run your personal headquarters around giving them all orders. The scenarios all tend to evolve along historical outcomes; not that this is necessarily bad—perhaps it teaches us that these battles were all destined to turn out the way they did regardless of the presence of the individual commanding generals. If that's the lesson, thanks very much but I would have rather read it in a book. If that's not the lesson, then I'm at a loss to explain my inability to achieve a gratifying level of involvement in the battles. Maybe I've missed some "trick" to successful utilization of "the commander" or maybe I'm just a poor leader, but I've played a lot of games (including quite a few excellent "command perspective" simulations) and I just don't get it. I feel the same involvement playing the game or just watching the computer play both sides.

TITLE:	Decisive Battles of the American Civil War—Vol. II: Gaines Mill to Chattanooga
SYSTEMS:	Apple II, C-64/128
# PLAYERS:	1-2
PRICE:	$40.00
DESIGNERS:	Roger Keating, Malcolm Power, and Ian Trout
PUBLISHER:	Strategic Studies Group Walnut Creek, CA

Any Bodies Left Breathing?

Actually, there is one missing design feature which I'm sure would have raised my excitement level for DBACW-II considerably—a pre-battle briefing to determine "rules of engagement" a la the Sim-Can games. In those games, the commander establishes a guiding set of principles or battle doctrine establishing proper procedures and priorities when the enemy is encountered. The biggest problem in DBACW-II is that the scenarios all start with the battle just about to be joined and all of your forces have already been given their "standing orders" as to posture and objectives. A critical element of being the commander is what you tell your subordinates to do *before* a battle actually begins. That way, when communications become a shambles during the battle, you have some hope that your minions will continue to pursue your overall objectives. Now, in all fairness, you *can* do this with DBACWII; it's just a pain. Thanks to the excellent scenario modification and design kit included with the game (have I forgotten to laud this standard element of all of SSG's designs? As usual, their games are basically worth the price if only for the tremendous scenario design capabilities in these marvelous utilities!), you can take any standard scenario and create a modified version. In this modification, you can go in and play around with the standing orders of all subordinates. By doing this, that key division that starts the game way at the other end of the map can immediately make the flanking attack which you would have ordered the night before the battle, had you been the actual commander. Get the idea?



Turn Your Radio On

Wait just a minute now, some will say. The game does include a perfect mechanism to raise your involvement as commander, a "radio flag". Yes, it is true, the start up menu includes a couple of options—one places all units visible on the screen whether "sighted" of not, and another toggles on a radio for you. Playing a game with the radio allows you to send orders to all of your subordinates at all times, regardless of the actual communications situation. First of all, the fact that SSG included the radio option in DBACWII tells me that they realized that playing without it would not give the gamer the same satisfaction one is accustomed to from SSG designs (after all, this series is the first of their designs to allow anything other than a strict "command perspective" playing) *Ed: Objection! This is calling for assumption on the part of the reviewer and does not take into consideration the rationale expressed by SSG; to wit, that the radio option is provided as a tutorial mode to get players accustomed to the mechanics of the game.]*. Second, DBACWII with the radio on is now like any of the other "God's-eye-view" classic-boardgame-style computer games. It is all right, but not noticeably improved over them. No, SSG games are "command perspective" games in my book. The radio is a nice touch and that's the way it plays most effectively, but for this design to make a statement it needed to work as intended; as a classic study simulating Civil War battlefield command.

Final Verdict

Few games have ever been as difficult for me to review as this one. I have dragged myself back to the computer time and again, fought more than thirty battles (mostly solitaire, but a couple against live foes), and can now enjoy the relief of being able to put the game up onto the top shelf of my "hallowed archives" for awhile. Why does a game which starts out with so much going for it ultimately leave me disappointed? Perhaps, because it destroys our illusions about the impact of ACW commanders or perhaps, because it isn't actually realistic simulations that gamers are looking for. Anyway, then, there you have it. This game is an excellent simulation of Civil War combat. brigades and larger formations all tend to behave in realistic ways. Computerized subordinate commanders adopt historical strategies and objectives. The results are realistic; both on the smaller scale of the individual brigade combats, and on the larger scale of the typical flow of the battles. Yet ultimately, I found no joy in the task of trying to move my men to glory.

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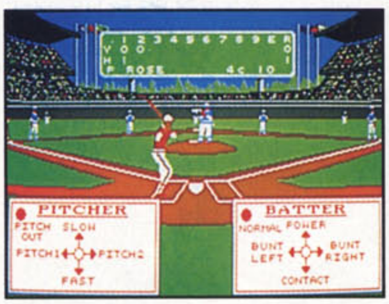


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(Continued from page 37)

Magical, Mystery Future

Once your team is created and their ship named, the game begins. It's a pretty frenetic beginning, as your transport ship comes under attack by raiders immediately upon arrival in the Caldorre system. Be certain you understand how to move the ship, raise or lower speed, target, and fire lasers, because there won't be much time to learn in the middle of battle.

This brings up an important point: never go into battle against raiders alone. Always make sure your fellow Interceptors are there with you or you could find your team dead very quickly. Carefully check the Federation display and observe where the rest of the squadron is before rushing off to fight.

For awhile, most of the team's experience points will come from shooting down raiders. This nets you 25 experience per person, plus 100 credits from the Federation. When nothing is happening in space (the raiders aren't always out there), you can make some quick cash by dropping off science missions. It's dull work, but it's safe and you get 700 per science packet dropped.

Mining isn't really worth the effort. Rambling around in hilly areas in your ATV to pick up the three types of ores is not only time consuming, but doesn't bring much money, either. If you do decide to mine, always sell your ores on the other planet, where you'll get a little bit more for them.

After awhile, you'll be up to where you can board raider ships. This is where you can experience some up close combat, for which projectile weapons are recommended. The only reason to board these ships, aside from the experience gained in fighting, is to raid the armories. These are always in the same place and always have the same items. Grab as much as you can, the tesselator if nothing else, as this will bring you 600 credits when you sell it. A few raider boardings, and you'll have a fair amount of cash for training and ammunition, as well as replenishing fuel supplies.

By the way, all those odd items, such as arisian lens and holophones and everything else, have no purpose (that I could discern) aside from being sold for cash. Don't buy any in the general store, just sell what you have there. In fact, you can sell almost anything even to the weapons stores; they'll buy your trinoculors and tesselators, too. The only things no one will purchase are the proscribed weapons, such as long range lasers and AK-4700's. However, you can buy and sell ammunition for illegal weapons anywhere.

In between blowing up raider ships and training up attributes, your team can pay a visit or two to the one town on Norjaenn. Here you'll learn about the feud between the farmers and the ranchers. Most of them have pretty much the same thing to say. The really important people are the ones who show up (in EGA) as pale blue dots; make sure you speak to all of them.

Speaking of blue, be on the lookout in space for blue ships, and hail each one you meet. One of them is Grager's space yacht and you *really* want to talk to him. For one thing, he'll do some nice things for your vessel (only once, though, so there's no point in going back again later).

The people in the towers are, for the most part, rather uncommunicative, and you won't learn very much from them. Caldorrians in particular will tell you nothing and most of the people in the bars are the same way. After awhile, this becomes rather frustrating.

Sooner or later, you will be called upon to settle a dispute between two races on Caldorre, the Warhaka and the Koshol. This is actually a simple mission, involving little more on your part than visiting the two races. The Koshol bear an uncanny resemblance to, well, Aliens, but they are quite peaceful and generally non-aggressive. Be sure to look around in the rooms, you might find a few useful things.

Some time after this, you'll hear about a distress signal from Borkin on Ceyjavik (an Icelandic-sounding planet where you make most of your science drops). You won't be able to find Borkin before you get this message on the Fed channel (it's a good idea to look at the Fed channels every so often, so you don't miss something important).

Be prepared for this mission, as Borkin is deserted except for rampaging ice tigers. They are very nasty customers and can do a great deal of damage. Come well-armed and well-armored for this one. To save you some time, the most important building to explore is the control center. The rest have little in them besides the tigers. However, fighting tigers is a good way of building up experience, if you're looking to do that.

Eventually you will find your way to an underground lab that leads in turn to an undersea volcano with five levels. Be prepared, since green dragons with acid breath are lurking down here (really!). They are most prevalent on the fifth level, but they also wander around in the upper levels.

At the end of this trip, you'll find the first part of the explanation for the raids on the transport ships and some idea of what you have to do next, although what is not entirely obvious. Fortunately, you do *not* have to go through the volcano to get back out again.

Actually, this is the time to pay a return visit to Norjaenn; you'll notice that some people who were there before aren't there now. Talking to the ranchers and farmers will provide the information you need to find the missing people. This, in turn, will bring you to the next major stepping-stone in the game, reaching the Sentinels.

One of the things you'll learn about from them is the battle station from which the raider ships are launched. This battle station can be a tough place, although it will also provide you with some neat armor and weapons. You'll probably make several trips to the station (once you find out where it is and how to get there) before you're ready for your actual tasks there. Note that the battle station armories are restocked between visits, so each time you arrive, there is a fresh set of weapons, ammunition, and treasure items to take.

Now, we come to the ending. Unfortunately, the final showdown with the chief bad guy (yes, there's one of those here) lacks any excitement. However, the worst is yet to come. Having dispatched the villain, you loot his chest of goodies (and there are some nice goodies in there) and hurry back to your ship.

As soon as your team is in the ship, it leaves the battle station. You get a brief "Congrats, you did a good job" message, followed by your team being put automatically into cold sleep. The game is saved at this very point to one of your two save positions. That's it, game over.

You don't get a chance to turn anything into cash or train anyone who might have gained levels while in the station. Just ZAP! it's all over until next time. This is one of the crudest endings since the days of the old two-word adventure games and considering the effort that was put into the rest of this game, you'd expect the authors to come up with something a little more elegant than that.

Heroes and Heavies of the Lance

by David M. Wilson

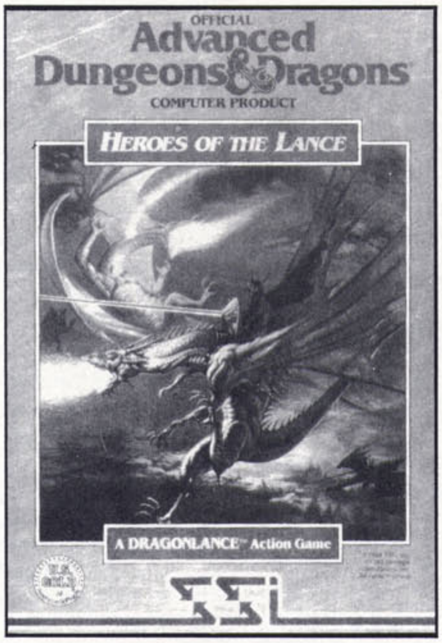
The dragon's fiery breath burned across Goldmoon's arms. The young cleric held aloft her blue crystal staff, source of her powerful magic, and began summoning forth the spell to deflect the dragon's breath away from her. Before she could finish the spell, her lover, Riverwind, darted swiftly between the black dragon and herself. Without a spell to protect him, he was literally roasted alive. It was left to Sturm Brightblade to dispatch the dragon with a vicious slash of his mighty broadsword.

Goldmoon knelt by her lover's scorched and blackened body. As tears glistened on her cheekbones, she raised her clerical staff and summoned forth its most powerful spell. In just a moment, Riverwind began to stir! Working feverishly, Goldmoon called forth healing spell after healing spell until the young warrior was completely whole.

"I thought I'd lost you," she said in a hushed tone.

After a brief healing session (faster than you can say Oral Roberts) the party continued their quest through the musty ruins of Xak Tsaroth.

—Roll Credits—



TITLE:	Heroes of the Lance
SYSTEMS:	Atari ST
# PLAYERS:	1
PRICE:	$39.95
DESIGNERS:	Laurence H. Miller and U.S. Gold Ltd.
PUBLISHER:	Strategic Simulations, Inc. Mountain View, CA

Scouting Locations

Sound like one of your own scenarios? *Heroes of the Lance* is based on **TSR**'s *DragonLance* game world, Krynn.(More specifically, it is based on the DragonLance game module: *DL1 Dragons of Despair*) These modules have already inspired a series of fantasy novels and a "DC" comic book based on the fantasy world. Now, courtesy of **SSI** and **U. S. Gold**, the fantasy moves onto computer disk. The player controls eight heroes in his search for the disks of Mishakal.

It seems appropros for the goal in a computer game to be recovering disks. This time it is not floppy disks, but the disks of Mishakal. These circular plates of platinum contain all that our heroes will need to restore the knowledge of the old gods to the people and help fight the Queen of Darkness. Once the people's faith is restored, the old gods will be able to intervene on behalf of their followers and the balance between good and evil will be restored. However, the Queen of Darkness has surrounded the ruins of Xak Tsaroth with mercenaries and monsters, so the party of heroes has no choice but to fight their way through the ancient temple until they get to the disks. When they find the disks, they face the biggest challenge of their warrior careers, a behemoth black dragon named Khisanth who guards the disks.

Cast of Characters

The characters will be well-known to followers of the DragonLance saga. They are a well-mixed crowd. Tanis is the half-human, half-elven warrior whose skill with a sword is surpassed only by his excellent marksmanship with a bow. Caramon and Raistlin Majere are twin brothers who seem to be the opposites in this party. Raistlin is a young mage who recently completed "the test" which gave him his powers, but ruined his physical attributes. Because his brother was constantly endangering himself, Caramon became his brother's protector and this has given Caramon a much needed honing of his battle skills. Sturm Brightblade's father, a knight of Solamnia, sent Sturm away for his own safety when enemies sought to destroy the family. Sturm was never again reunited with his father, but swore that all ideals of knighthood would forever govern his life. His skill with the two-handed sword marks him as the best fighter in the party and a logical choice for point man. Goldmoon and Riverwind are two young lovers who have left their tribe and are now looking for a group called the seekers. The lovers hope the seekers can explain the strange powers of Goldmoon's staff. Riverwind was sentenced to death when he brought the staff home from a quest, but could not make it work for Goldmoon's father, the tribal chief. With the aid of the Blue Crystal staff, Goldmoon magically spirited Riverwind away from the danger. Tasselhoff Burrfoot is a kender, a member of that race of small people who have earned a reputation for "appropriating" anything that is not nailed down. Tasselhoff has explained to the group that the kender don't steal for stealing's sake, but because of their overly developed sense of curiosity. (They probably still closely watch the little man, anyway.) His main weapons are a combination staff and slingshot. The last individual in the party is also a little man. He carries a huge battleaxe and villains and monsters don't seem to enjoy meeting him at axe-throwing range.

Each time this game is booted, players are greeted with a portrait of each character. Before play begins, the program checks to see if players have read the manual, utilizing a pop quiz (copy protection) with questions like: What is the strength for the character Riverwind?

Stage Directions

Players must select a marching order for their eight people. It is imperative to keep the mage and cleric in the front line. Raistlin and Goldmoon are free to work their magic only if they are one of the first four characters in line. Although your magic users should be in the front ranks, great pains must be taken to protect them from harm, especially Goldmoon. Her clerical staff is of no use to any other characters. Since she is the group medic, keep her alive at all costs.

Personally, I like the following marching order: 1) Sturm, 2) Flint, 3) Raistlin, 4) Goldmoon, 5) Tanis, 6) Riverwind, 7) Caramon and 8) Tasselhoff. This order can be changed at any time throughout the game. The player controls the marching order, *except* when a hero is killed or Goldmoon is badly hurt. At any point that Goldmoon is in serious danger, Riverwind automatically races to the front to defend her.

Combat is handled via joystick. Only the hero in the very front can fight. He gets all the glory and most of the wounds. However, players may also use magic during a combat round. Don't be afraid to stop a battle round and utilize a magic spell because to survive it will take everything that the party has.

The attributes in the manual play more of a part in the game

(Continued on page 56)

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than is easily discerned. For instance, Raistlin is extremely weak and is easily defeated in any type of a physical battle. He moves slowly, almost walking with a limp. He doesn't jump, he levitates (you've got to see this). Other attributes also impact the game's play, since this is "hack and slash" role-playing without the paper and dice. No one will win this game solely because he knew how to handle a joystick. Each character is programmed in and it's up to the player to make the most effective decision in utilizing each character.

The enemies are: mercenaries, Baaz Draconians (gargoyle type creatures) who turn to dust when destroyed; Giant spiders, (remember to swing that sword down); Trolls who are almost impossible to kill in a pitched battle unless a magic spell is used (either charm or hold person) to freeze them while the heroes slash away; Gully dwarfs who are scummy little nuisances and do little or no damage, but will remove character's deserted bodies; Wraiths who drain away your lifeforce (charm and slay these quickly); Hatchling Black Dragons (these are easily killed once a character who is protected by a "Deflect Dragon Breath" spell pursues them into a corner and swings for their legs and lower body); and the BIG MAMA dragon herself, Khisanth.

The game manual advises strategic withdrawals when an opponent is overpowering a party. These strategic retreats provide the party with a time for healing. Also, it is good to keep in mind that the further a party progresses, the more monsters it will encounter.

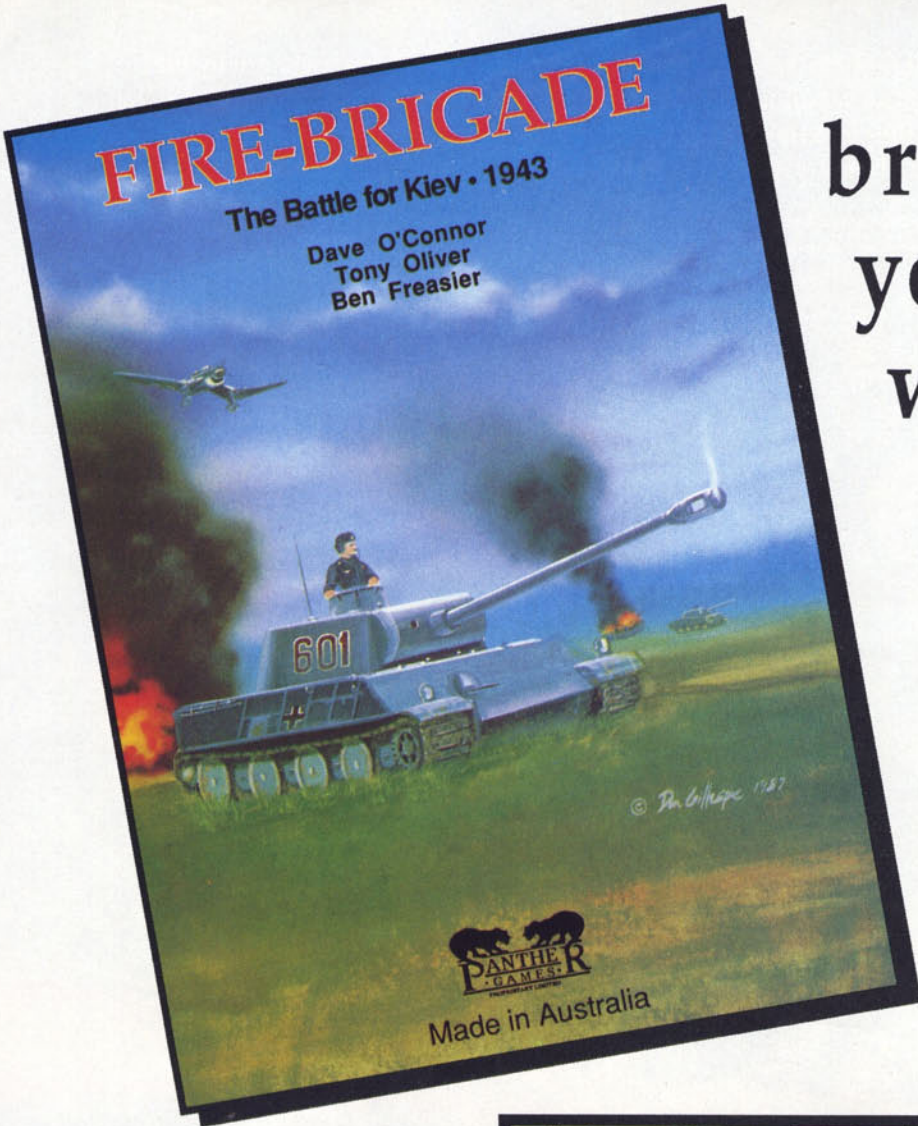
Players will eventually find their way into a room that is a complicated maze full of chasms and pitfalls. Remember that when a group turns, they are not moving in that direction only spinning on their heels. The maze is a bit complex for the average player and may prove to be a serious drawback to some (**Hint:** Don't turn your back on the South or *you* might not rise again!).

The graphics on the ST version are extremely satisfying and visually appealing. Rarely does a program lend so much attention to detail outside of the title screens. Each character is presented in a manner consistent with the illustrations of the *DragonLance* game modules, comic books and fantasy novels.

The sound effects are above average with appropriate grunting and groaning in battle sequences. The sound of sizzling dragon's breath sounds like a blazing campfire. Repeatedly wounding an enemy may produce a series of quick groans which is similar to someone tossing their cookies. The sounds really add to the flavor of the game. The theme music is the only exception, it just didn't seem to fit the tone of the game.

Press Clippings

Heroes of the Lance is a quality product that will leave most players with the strong conviction that **TSR** selected the right company to produce the computer versions of **AD & D** products. *DragonLance* fans are not the only group that will be impressed. If you like an action/strategy blend in a fantasy game, this product is for you.



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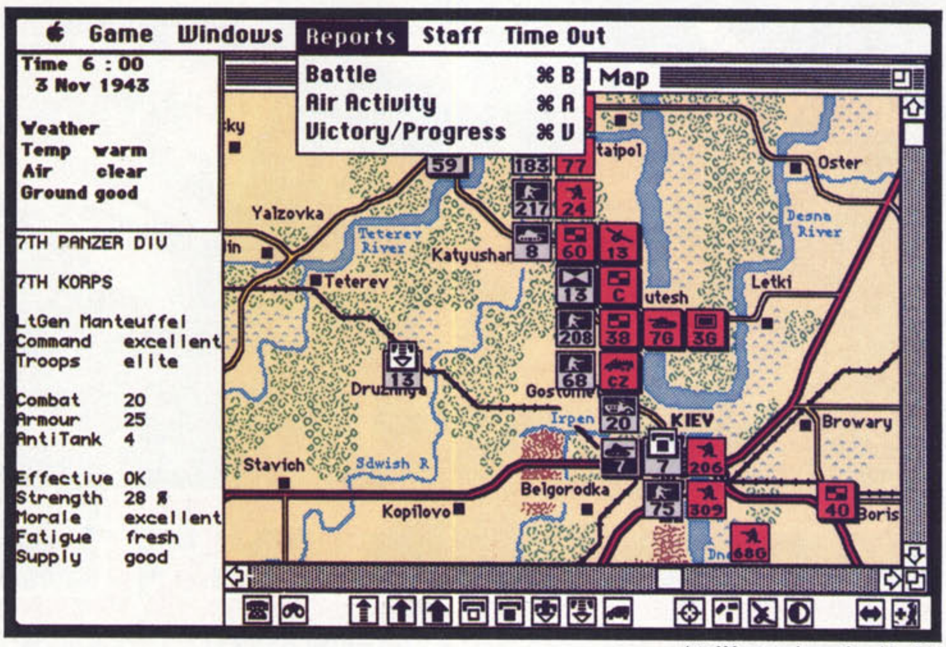
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Actual Mac screen dump, coloured for effect.

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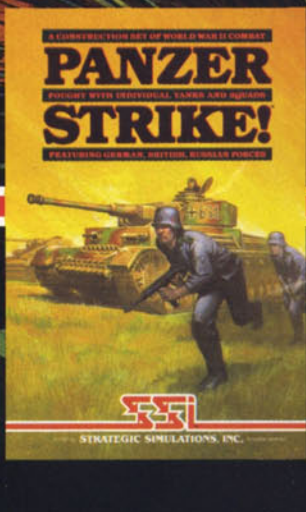


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(Continued from page 6)



them to create a new readable phrase. I'd hate to see any sequel to The Fool's Errand which didn't include such a unique and fun type of puzzle.

Steve Meretzky
Cambridge, MA

Ed: We presume that, as Infocom's gregarious guru of goofiness and a prominent game designer yourself ("Leather Goddesses of Phobos," "Zork Zero," "Planetfall," and "Stationfall," among others), your observation will bear enough weight to send Cliff Johnson (designer of "The Fool's Errand") happily back to include a new puzzle in his sequel and to offer Alan Roberts (our reviewer) a new perspective on the previous puzzle.

Fly The Scenic Skies

We have been swamped with phone calls from owners of Microsoft Flight Simulator version 3 concerned that the product will not support SubLOGIC Scenery Disks.

The following information is crucial for loading and operating Scenery Disks with Flight Simulator and applies to Europe Scenery Disk as well as Scenery Disks #1-#7, Japan and San Francisco.

Although Flight Simulator's manual does not include any reference to Scenery Disk support outside a mention on page 75, a "readme.doc" file on the disk itself does explain the procedure for converting a Scenery Disk to a scenery file and loading the file to a hard disk.

You can load a Scenery Disk in either of two ways: as a copy protected disk from drive A or as a scenery file loaded into the same hard disk subdirectory as Flight Simulator. To load the scenery disk from drive A, you first need to load Flight Simulator from the hard drive or a floppy drive (preferably on drive B but you can operate both from drive A in a pinch).

When you're positioned for take-off, press hift-E to bring up the Scenery Library menu. Choose option 1 (Floppy disk in Drive A) or the number associated with the scenery file you wish to use. Then invoke the NAV/COM menu and choose selection A to set your position within the scenery area.

This should have Flight Simulator soaring through the scenery in no time. Of course, if further assistance is required, the SubLOGIC customer support department can be reached, toll free outside Illinois at (800) 637-4983 or (217) 359-8482 within the state.

Thanks for helping to get the word out.

Sincerely,
Deb Israel
SubLOGIC



(Continued from page 28)

Mirror Images

The game is personalized for me and keeps my interest. By allowing the player to mix and match character heads and torsos to create portraits of our player characters, I was even able to make one that looks something like the real weasel-faced me. I like that!

In fact, while I'm talking about art, SSI has put together some of the best art to be seen in any fantasy role-playing game. The colors are well-chosen for the C-64/128: bright green, yellow, blue, black, maroon, orange, red, and white. There is a variety of different walls, doors, shop entrances, buildings, etc.—more variety than I have seen in any other crpg, including *The Bard's Tale* series (which used to be my standard of excellence). The 3-D perspective is very effective and the portraits of the monsters are brilliantly realized. Some, like lizard-men, have spot animation and some don't, but when they do, it is cleverly done. Nice job!

The third important factor in game design is that the game must seem winnable and be worth doing. Every CRPG currently on the market seems too tough on the players. This is probably a holdover from the days of arcade gaming when the idea was to separate customers from their quarters. Killing a never-ending stream of monsters to build up hit points and other attributes gets boring after a while, no matter how good the art is. Mixing the monsters with puzzles to solve and tasks to accomplish keeps the game fresh for a longer period of time. In spite of always being outnumbered in this game, most of the combats seem winnable. Beyond this, a very nice touch in the combat algorithm is that NPCs in the game have morale and must succeed at a morale check or be forced to run or surrender. My fighters may be on their last legs, but we know we're home free when the foes begin to run or surrender. I love it!

Fourth, the world of the game must hold surprises. Pool is holding up nicely. It blew me away the first time I went to a tavern in town. It seemed to be a one-trick place where you could play a simple even-money gambling game. Suddenly, I was jostled by a thief. When I chose to react violently, I found myself in a no-holds barred tavern brawl . . . to the death! Even better, half the fighters in there turned out to be on my side. It was a real brouhaha, but we won. Then, when it was over, the watch showed up. One of these times, I'm going to stay and see what happens if we don't run away when the "cops" arrive.

There are several other surprises that I've encountered in the city of Phlan. The scenario designers fairly dare the players to let their antisocial impulses go by challenging you to break into shops or the town hall at night when they are closed. The watch wanders around in huge gangs of mid-level fighters (much tougher than my beginning-level fighters) and practically dares you to make trouble. In addition, the training halls will allow you to recruit NPCs for your party, but they'll also cut you off if you go through too many choices. I'm still at the beginning of the Pool of Radiance adventure and I look forward to surprises to come.

In a more critical vein, Pool of Radiance is *not* a perfect game design. Several parts of it leave me unimpressed. Even with the computer handling the complexity of the A D & D rules, some parts of the game are too cumbersome. I have wasted hours having my characters memorize the same spells over and over again. The automap function is also a big waste of time. It only shows you where the walls in the vicinity are, whether you've been there or not. This is illogical. How would you know? Part of the fun of this kind of game is doing the mapping involved (even if it scrolls up on the screen step-by-step as you explore). Finally, even though the programming is done well (except for the introduction, the program is in assembly language), the disk access time required on the Commodore forces a slower than optimal pace.

Still, no matter how many quibbles I throw into this article, they are only quibbles. Overall, I like this game and think the entire SSI design team has done a very good job. Take it from a "rival" designer, *Pool of Radiance* has my recommendation for every computer fantasy role-playing gamer.

Counterpoint

It's D & D and I Don't!

by Tracie Forman Hines

Tracie Forman Hines is an experienced adventure gamer. CGW was surprised to hear that she was not impressed with "Pool of Radiance," so we asked her to share her reasons in this article.

The best thing you can say about *Pool of Radiance* is that it is real, by-the-book, *Dungeons and Dragons* . . . the rules . . . the play . . . the original role-playing adventure. Of course, that is similar to saying that the best thing about an 8K, build-it-yourself **Apple** computer is that it was the first.

In the last few years, computer dungeonmasters like Lord British, Andrew Greenberg, Robert Woodhead, and Brian Fargo's **Interplay** team have helped to evolve computer role-playing into absorbing, innovative worlds you can get lost in. Pool of Radiance does not accomplish this for me.

The box says Pool of Radiance is based on the *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons* system. Funny—it looks a lot like Basic, or non-Advanced *D&D* to me. This battle-scarred ex-dungeonmaster noticed a number of "advanced" enhancements missing. Notice that the more exotic character classes like Ranger, Paladin, and Druid are not included. Further, the choice of characters is limited to the standard Fighter, Mage, and Cleric classes . . . just like the "basic" game.

Moreover, advancements and spellcasting are severely curtailed, leaving players with only first, second, and third level spells. So, no matter how much experience a cleric might earn, he or she will never be able to cast the most valuable incantation of all, "Raise Dead." "Magic Missile" spells are the best a mage can aspire to, albeit, they are a bit more potent than similar spells in other games since they strike multiple enemies (and sometimes, friends) within a large radius.

One area of the game is *truly* innovative for CRPGs: the player's ability to customize his or her own character icon. In Pool of Radiance, players not only choose their race, class, and sex, but also pick what they look like. When new characters are created, one can pick from a large assortment of character faces and body types to illustrate the new arrival in close-up mode. Battle icons can also be customized according to the type of armor and weaponry the new character wears. This feature is especially nice because it enables each character to be differentiated at a glance during battle sequences.

Customizing characters is a great idea inspired by face-to-face role-playing with miniature figures. It would be nice to see this feature incorporated into other computer RPGs. Alas, however,

(Continued on page 62)

(Continued from page 60)

Mirror Images

even this feature has its murky points in Pool of Radiance. When you customize your icon, you are presented with a choice of a large or small icon. Good luck trying to figure out the difference, though. As many times as we selected first one option, then the other, we never did find a difference. The rule book was no help on this point.

Another oddity about the character creation sequence is its apparent sexism in one area and its complete disregard for gender in another. Any female character automatically begins the game with less strength. It may be realistic, but since there is no corresponding increase in charisma (as in Basic *Dungeons & Dragons*), having female characters becomes a poor strategic choice.

Players who go ahead and create female characters anyway will be surprised to be offered a number of bearded faces when they customize their character pictures. This after the rule book states so emphatically that the choice of illustrations is based on the type of character chosen.

The documentation is excellent, but I take exception to the rune-wheel copy-protection. Although code-wheels are certainly a common form of copy-protection, this one consists of dozens of tiny, squiggly runes that can strain eyes to distraction.

The game consists of a series of mini-quests which grow progressively more difficult. If you prefer puzzles and strategy to hacking your way through armies of orcs, however, you will probably be disappointed. Most of the early mini-quests consist of such strategic missives as "Clear out the bad section of town" or "Go to the woods and kill everything in there." I never heard a word about secret messages or people, fantastic objects or wandering mages.

As time passes in the game, the world becomes more populated with fiendish creeps. Rather than run into a few more lethal creatures, however, players are apt to find groups of 20, 30, or even more orcs. Needless to say, the ensuing battle can be mind-numbingly long.

During battle, you have to wait for each and every monster to move, even if all they are doing is guarding something. With a big group, a melee round can take upwards of half an hour.

It is not even safe to stop into a tavern for some beer and a chat. While our party was visiting, a brawl broke out and we were literally trapped in the middle of the melee, a sequence that lasted 40 minutes—too long for a sideline event.

Dungeonmasters (DMs) have always been the heart and soul of RPGs. Personally, I always found the best DMs were those who didn't stick by every single rule. Pool seems to have a DM problem—the rules and restrictions often seem more important than the game. Don't get me wrong—Pool of Radiance is not *all* bad. However, with so many truly outstanding adventures on the market, *Pool of Radiance* does not make my "A" list.

(Continued from page 13)

Everything You've Always Wanted to Know About "Empire"

lan forces should be easy to stop and mop up. To the northwest, however, things are not moving as smoothly. Kadma has hit your protecting fleet hard with battleships and a carrier. Once you lose control of the seas in that region, your land forces will not be able to hold out. Nevertheless, you are, even now, assembling your own invasion forces. "The Book" does have some good advice in invading enemy-held territory, though . .

The time will come when you will be required to invade a strongly held island/continent of the enemy. This is no small matter. You will need to build a large armada for the operation. Assemble as many transports as are available for the core of your fleet. The more armies you can deploy in the initial strike, the better chance you will have of overwhelming the enemy. Provide several heavy ships (battleships and cruisers), not only to protect the transports, but to provide shore bombardment for your invading armies. If the invasion is to occur outside the range of land-based fighters, an aircraft carrier is a must. Its fighters are important for scouting for the fleet, softening up the invasion area, and stopping enemy counterattacks. Destroyers should be used to scout around your fleet, acting as both an early warning system and protection from enemy submarines just waiting for a juicy transport or carrier to sink.

Upon landing your armies, send your transports back immediately to carry additional armies to support the invasion. Be sure to escort these returning transports so they don't fall prey to enemy submarines. Keep the pressure on the enemy and soon he/she will be falling back on all fronts. Once this has happened, his/her doom is sealed and the war becomes a simple mop-up action.

Things are going better, but at what a cost. The incursion to the northwest has been turned back and, all along the front, Krellan supported forces are in retreat. Kadma Pztlam will be working in the pleasure houses after the Krellan Command gets done with her. They do not appreciate commanders who fail!

What! New combat reports are coming in from the east! Invasion fleets are reported outside the cities of Dupplin Moor, Shijo Nawate, Ypres, and Blenheim. What is happening? These cannot be Krellan-controlled forces! They aren't. Those foul-smelling Zaldrons have decided to initiate their own Operation Big Brother. More enemy fleets are being reported and all your forces are tied up fighting Krellans half a world away!

New reports! Zaldron transports are now outside your home city of Spion Kop. You have no forces to stop them. Explosions can now be heard in the distance and the sky is lit with the macabre beauty of multi-colored power rays. As you destroy "The Book" to prevent it from falling into enemy hands, you wonder if the Krellan pleasure houses may have room for one more employee.

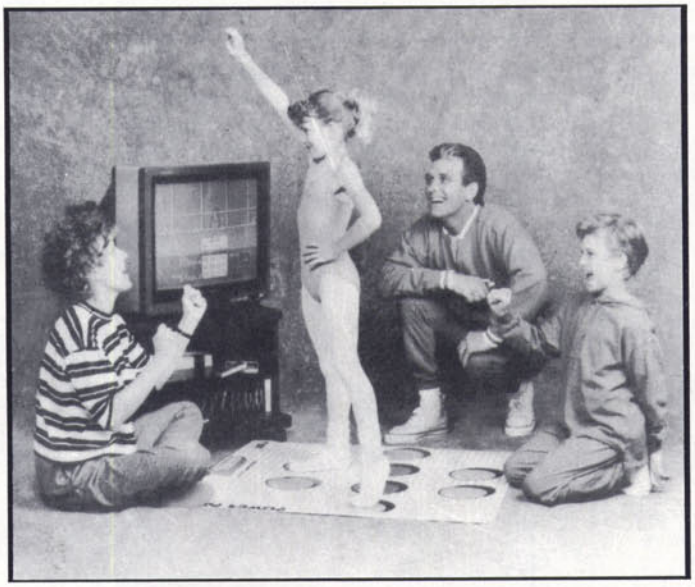
Video Gaming World

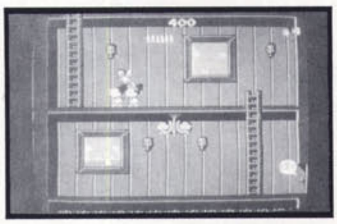
by Bill Kunkel, Joyce Worley, & Arnie Katz

Video Gaming World's Newswire

-Compiled by Joyce Worley

Sega is going head-to-head with **Nintendo** this Christmas, with their own version of the arcade hit *Double Dragon*. The **Sega** version has a two-person cooperative play option and 64-color arcade translated graphics . . . The "Atari Advantage Collector Promotion" is a bonus for frequent buyers. The gamer picks up a free poster and catalog from a videogame retailer, then attaches a proof of purchase seal from each game pack he buys. When enough are accumulated to earn a prize, the poster goes back to **Atari** for redemption. Five games gets you a free "Atari Advantage" T-shirt and fifteen games nets a free game cartridge (for any **Atari** system). Twenty-five games gives the consumer a special reduced price on **Atari** hardware (the 7800 system for $25 or choice of either an XE system or disk drive for $50), plus a chance to win a seven day expense paid trip for two to the **Atari** headquarters in California . . . *Mickey Mousecapade* (**Capcom USA**, for **NES**) sends Mickey and Minnie through a fun house, across the ocean, into a forest, onto a pirate ship, and into a mysterious castle, as they seek a missing friend. Obstacles include: falling spiders, wizards, scorpions, and pirates (who heave skulls at the pair of mystified mice). The game is designed for younger players in particular, but is suitable for adults, as well . . . "More than 50 million *Othello* games have been sold world-wide," says Robert Holmes, Senior Vice-President of **Acclaim**. Rob went on to explain that people in 106 countries flipped their wigs over the classic "Reversi" game and now, it's coming for **Nintendo** . . . *WWF Wrestlemania*, **(Acclaim)**, featuring Hulk Hogan, Randy Savage, Andre the Giant, and other WWF fighters, lets **Nintendo** players use bodyslams, headlocks, dropkicks, and other maneuvers to recreate WWF battles . . . **Tengen Inc.** (a subsidiary of **Atari**) has signed a licensing deal with **Mirrorsoft** of England for *Tetris*. The license covers all video home formats, including the **NES**. Players rotate and flip moving blocks as they fall down an on-screen shaft, to form unbroken rows. Developed by two Soviet programmers, the mental skill game intrigued computer games in both Europe and America, as well as copping numerous "Best of the Year" awards . . . **Sega**'s *Shinobi* is a 19-round martial arts war against street thugs, commandos, and Ninjas, fought against realistic backgrounds. The landscapes include: warehouse districts, mountainsides with underground fortresses, and an oriental palace. The attackers have swords, bombs, guns, and steel boomerangs, but the *Shinobi* hero wins secret Ninjutsu powers as the game progresses. This "Ninja magic" can freeze the enemy in his tracks, make the gamer's on-screen surrogate fly through the air, or cause lightning to strike the enemy. Still more ominous is the magic that commands eight miniature Ninjas to burst from your (on-screen) body to fight and subdue your foes . . . *Business Week* magazine chose **Nintendo of America** as one of the best companies in the world. In an article called, "The Global 1000—The Leaders," the journal of business news ranked the entertainment company as #321. The companies were rated on price/earnings ratio, return on equity, sales growth, profits, and total assets over a 12 month period . . . The **Nintendo** *Power Set*, available at most retail outlets, is a complete system for high-energy players. It comes with everything to get started, including the **Nintendo Control Deck**, two game controllers, the *Zapper* light gun, and the **Nintendo** *Power Pad*. The two-sided vinyl pad measures 38" by 37" and plugs into the #2 controller socket, where it affects on-screen game action by the player standing or pressing on the red and blue colored circles. The *Power Set* comes with a three-game cartridge including: *Super Mario Bros.* (played with the regular controllers), *Duck Hunt* (for use with the Zapper light gun), and *World Class Track Meet* (controlled by the Power Pad). *Track Meet* includes a 100 Meter Dash, Long Jump, 110 Meter Hurdles, and Triple Jump. The events are combined in a special Olympics format for multiple players. Victory depends on the ability to control pace, as well as coordinate speed, and timing. Other games available for the Power Pad are *Dance Aerobics* and *Super Team Games*. The Power Pad's smoking hot play mechanics come with a warning: *It may be hazardous for persons with heart, respiratory, back and joint problems, high blood pressure, or pregnant women.*







(Top) The Nintendo Power Pad. (Bottom left & right) Capcom's Mickey Mousecapade.

Batter Up!

For some reason, sports games have been among the weakest entries on both the **Sega** and **Nintendo** systems. *Bases Loaded* is a distinct improvement on most of the team sports videogames we've seen so far (including **Nintendo**'s own *Baseball* cartridge), but it is still far from the ideal simulation of the national pastime.

Bases Loaded resembles *Hardball* (**Accolade**) with its emphasis on the pitcher vs. batter confrontation. The problem is that it is not nearly as successful in realistically depicting that interaction.

The brute fact is that it is too hard to hit the ball. The perspective employed for pitching/hitting (either a shortstop or second

baseman's viewpoint, depending on whether the pitcher is left or right-handed) simply does not allow the player at bat to easily gauge the ball's position *vis a vis* the plate. The ball is easy to track as it leaves the pitcher's hand, but about halfway to the plate, the depth of field collapses and the ball seems to hang briefly in mid-air before appearing suddenly in the catcher's glove. The scene is further confused by the fact that the on-screen umpire calls strikes by punching his right fist into the air. However, since the umpire wears a dark blue suit and stands against a similarly colored background, all that's visible is his pumping white fist, which, of course, looks just like the ball. As a result, when the ball would be called a strike, the ball (which is actually the umpire's hand) seems to leap into the air at the last second.

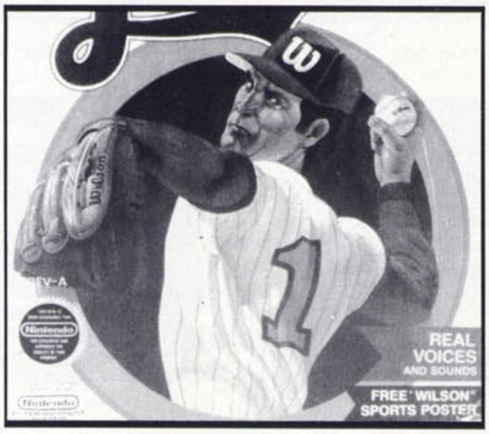
It isn't just mere mortals that find the batting tough, however, even the computer-controlled team can be struck out almost at will. During one inning, ;this reviewer struck out the side on nine pitches—*all of them thrown at slow speed right down the middle of the plate.* Moreover, no pitch was faster than 72 mph (the speed of each pitch is displayed on screen).

This boils down to games that take *far* too long to play (one nine inning contest took almost 75 minutes) with way too many pitches thrown. This is unfortunate because it destroys much of the game's excitement and, even more disappointing since *Bases Loaded* portrays on-the-field action, especially infield play, quite well. Again, there are exceptions, but once the ball is hit, this game's excitement level rises dramatically.

Bases Loaded uses a multiple-viewpoint play mechanic. So, when the ball is hit, the perspective shifts to an angled overhead view of the relevant portion of the field. The graphics are attractive in both modes, but the on-field view is superior from a gameplay point of view. The individual player animation is very nice.

When a ball is hit into the cavernous outfield (they could hold a rock festival in right center without greatly disturbing play), an overview diagram of the diamond is displayed so that the user can track and, if desired, advance his/her baserunners.

There are several annoying flaws in *Bases Loaded* that almost ruin the game. On balls hit to outfield, the field scrolls from the infield back. The problem is,



TITLE:	Bases Loaded
SYSTEM:	Nintendo
# PLAYERS:	1-2
PRICE:	$44.95
PUBLISHER:	Jaleco

the defensive player has no idea where his outfielders are so can only guess which one is under his/her control.

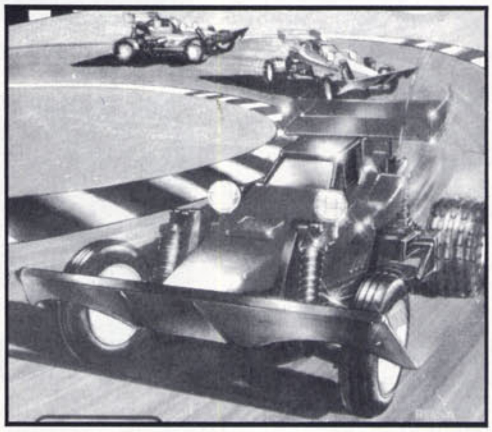
There's a tendency for fielders to begin running in random patterns once the ball is hit. This is especially annoying when, for example, the shortstop breaks toward third base on a ball hit up the middle. There is also a pick-off play, but no real reason for one since there's no stealing. In fact, the player at bat can't even set the length of his/her baserunners' lead.

Most annoying, however, is the game's pretense at offering strategic options. Twelve teams are available, each containing non-existent players, most of whom have no statistics or ratings in any skill areas. So, there isn't a dime's worth of difference between them. The sole statistic offered to the user is the pitcher's ERA, but this is meaningless. The only thing that really matters is how fast and accurately the pitcher throws.

This game is a mixed bag. It has attractive animation and good graphics combined with a very intensive hitter-pitcher simulation. However, the frustrations frequently threaten to overwhelm its virtues.—Bill Kunkel

Start Your Engines

R.C. (radio controlled) *Pro-Am* is a compelling, innovating approach to car racing videogames. Because the player isn't pretending to be *inside* the car, the designers were able to



TITLE:	R.C. Pro-Am
SYSTEM:	Nintendo
# PLAYERS:	1
PRICE:	$29.95
DESIGNER:	Rare, Ltd.
PUBLISHER:	Nintendo

do away with the over-used pseudo-first-person perspective seen in games like *Enduro* (**Sega**), *Mach Rider* (**Nintendo**), and *Pole Position* (**Atari**). Instead of watching the action from *behind* the wheel of their vehicle, the user views an idealized version of what the radio-control racing fan sees: a smoothly scrolling, angled overhead perspective of the four-lane track.

The result is an enormously satisfying contest in which the player guides his/her remote control pick-up truck (complete with antenna receiver) against a trio of computer-guided drones over 32 different courses. In fact, the game's major weakness is the lack of a two-player mode.

Its strengths, however, are legion. The player's driving skills are really put to the test as he/she maneuvers around puddles, oil slicks, squalls, pop-up metal barriers, deadly skulls, and other vehicles. Meanwhile, the player must attempt to pick up the various bonus objects: roll cages, zippers, missiles, bombs, and ammo.

The flimsy instruction booklet fails to mention what these items actually *do*, but some are obvious. Missiles are fired from the front of the vehicle while bombs are dropped from the rear. Others are less clear in their purpose. After countless play sessions, it's still unclear what a "zipper" is or how a roll cage is useful to a radio-controlled car.

There is no such problem in figuring out how the weapons work: if you can't outrace 'em, you blow 'em up. Demolished vehicles reconstruct themselves quickly, but precious time is lost in the regeneration. The missiles are more valuable than bombs, of course, since you must be in front of the targeted vehicle in order to employ the bombs, while missiles can be fired at the drones up ahead.

The major bonus items are the Turbos (which increase acceleration around turns), Engines (boost top speed), and Sticky Tires (provide superior traction). Also crucial are the bonus letters. If a player spells out "Nintendo," the pick-up is replaced by a faster four-wheeler. A second spelling of the company moniker allows the user to trade up to an even faster off-road vehicle.

The play system used is delightfully simple and very reminiscent of the control mechanic employed in real radio-controlled racing. The "B" action button serves as the accelerator and the control pad steers the vehicle while the "A" button fires any weapons (or, if no weapon is available, beeps a horn).

R-C Pro-Am's sounds and graphics are just fantastic and help make this the best game of its kind ever produced in any electronic game format. Even the scoreboard is gorgeous. Each win, place, or show is represented by an on-screen trophy of some sort (including golden wrenches, loving cups, and statuettes).

Players who put a great premium on realism and are bothered by the idea of "picking up" things like engines and tires on the fly must take warning. There are many such surreal touches in this game. For players in search of a super racing simulation, *R-C Pro-Am* fills the bill perfectly.

—Bill Kunkel

words with this interesting puzzle generator. The player can design his own puzzles, modify an existing one, or try to solve one of the 40 that are provided on disk. Devise a puzzle based solely on politics or some other equally "virtuous" activity. IBM with graphic adaptor Circle Reader Service #5.

CRL
Scorpion
19 Harbor Drive
Lake Hopatcong, NJ 07849

ALIEN DESTRUCTION SET: Players choose from four different missions in this group of action games. The documentation consists of an audio cassette that sets the background for each game and gives tips on how to succeed. Ready, set, die. C-64/128 ($29.95) Circle Reader Service #6

BLACK SHADOW: Attractive graphics enhance this action game in which the player must destroy the "death asteroid". Top down view and smooth scrolling add to the impressive feel of the product. Documentation comes on an audio cassette. Amiga ($34.95). Circle Reader Service #7.

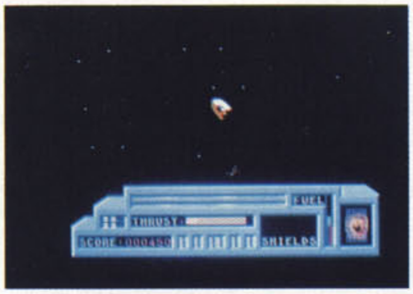
DESERT RATS: The only thing you can't change in this historical simulation of WWII desert warfare is the "gerbil" insignia of the "desert rats". Players choose from one or two player option, scrolling maps, and six scenarios to recreate all or a portion of the desert campaign. IBM ($39.95). Circle Reader Service #8.

Interplay Productions
1575 Corporate Drive
Costa Mesa, CA 92626

NEUROMANCER: Based on William Gibson's cyberpunk novel, this role-playing adventure game combines great graphics with a soundtrack by DEVO. Players use a variety of skills to break into government and corporate computer systems. That could never happen in real life, though. Apple II ($44.95), C-64/128 ($39.95). Circle Reader Service #9.

Lyric Software, Inc.
6 Beach Plum Drive
Northport, N.Y. 11768

UNDER THE ICE: Players control either NATO or Soviet subs in this detailed, submarine combat simulation. Multi-scenarios; radar; infra red detection; active and passive sonar; tor-



Alien Destruction Set



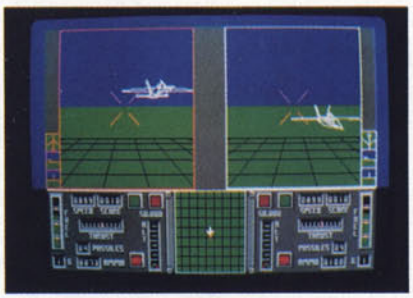
Black Shadow



Neuromancer



Under the Ice



Sky Chase



Visions of Aftermath

pedoes; cruise missiles; jammers; they're all in this future WWIII game. Time can be compressed or speeded up depending on the situation. You'll really feel the chills of future warfare down under the ice. Atari ST, IBM ($39.95). Circle Reader Service #10.

Maxis Software
953 Mountain View Drive
Suite 113
Lafayette, CA 94549

SKYCHASE: Full stereo sound and smooth wire-frame animation highlight this joystick driven, jet simulator. Players choose from six different jets, or fly a lightening fast paper airplane against human or computer opponents. Fighters can be customized as can the computer. Side by side view screens and joysticks keep both players locked on the screen, not the keyboard. Amiga, Atari 520 ST ($39.95). Circle Reader Service #11.

Mindscape
3444 Dundee Rd.
Northbrook, IL 60062

VISIONS OF AFTERMATH: THE BOOMTOWN: One to sixteen can play this post-holocaust, survival simulation which allows the player to customize the world and tailor the environment. Rebuild civilization, conquer society, or just survive; you'll find new meaning for the words "Home, Sweet Home." IBM/Tandy ($39.95) Circle Reader Service #12

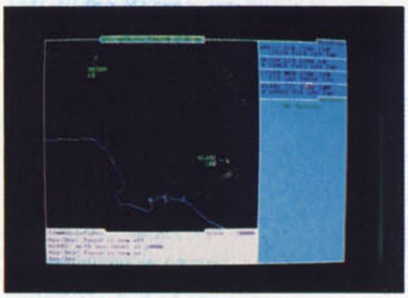
Psygnosis Ltd.
1st Floor, Port of Liverpool
Building



Chrono Quest



Off Shore Warrior



Tracon

Pier Head, Liverpool
Merseyside, U.K. L3 1BY

CHRONO QUEST: The player must find a time machine, hidden in a chateau, then travel forward and back in time to track down his father's murderer in this graphic adventure game. Beautiful graphics and icon-controlled play make this interesting product worth a second look. Time travel, anyone? Atari ST, Amiga ($44.95). Circle Reader Service #13.

Titus Software
20432 Corisco St.
Chatsworth, CA 91311

OFF SHORE WARRIOR: Players battle opponents and the elements in futuristic, missile-armed speedboats. Maneuver between rocks and hard places while attempting to overtake and vaporize the other boats. Weekend water skiers, watch out! Amiga, Atari ST, IBM ($39.95). Circle Reader Service #14.

Wesson International
1439 Circle Ridge
Austin, TX 78746

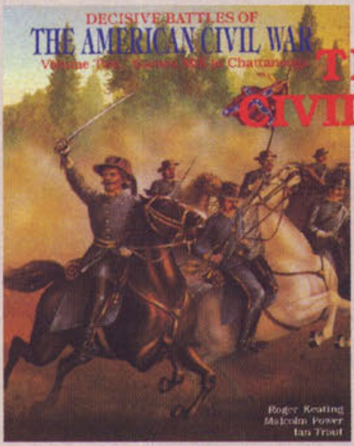
TRACON: An incredibly detailed, air traffic control simulation that will keep you glued to your screen. Created by a FAA manager and professional controllers, this program plays like an ATC trainer. "Players" adjust traffic loads, weather and pilot ratings as they run any of five different cities. You win by not losing! IBM ($49.95). Circle Reader Service #15.

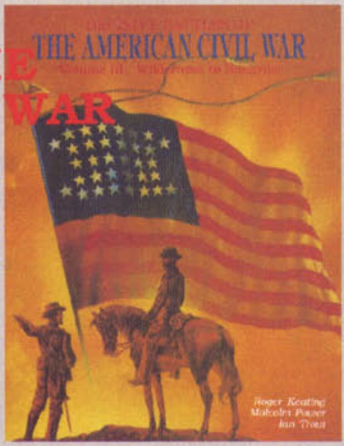
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Or will you, as George Gordon Meade, stop the Army of Northern Virginia at Gettysburg and fatally turn the war against the Confederacy... ?





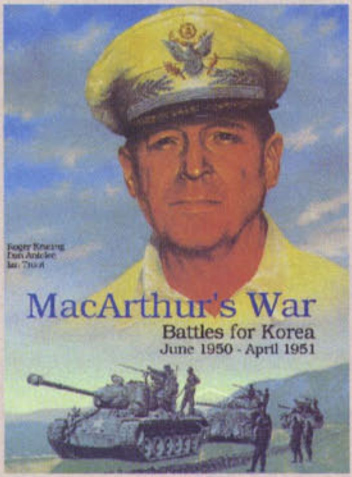
WILDERNESS
SPOTSYLVANIA
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ATLANTA
FRANKLIN
NASHVILLE

Can you, commanding the veterans of Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia, stop Ulysses S. Grant's Army of the Potomac from capturing Richmond... ?
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The Korean War

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Scavengers of Significa!

The 50th Issue Trivia Contest Results

The entries for CGW's Scavenger Hunt were so excellent, they even surprised us. Since we received two perfect responses and a couple of near-perfect responses, it seemed ludicrous to try for a tie-breaker. Our philanthropic playboy publisher has decided to dig deep in his wallet and pay a $100.00 first prize to **both**: William N. Moes of Defiance, Ohio and Alan Mandell of DeSoto, Texas.

In addition, the second prize (a two year complimentary subscription to CGW) goes to Kenneth Helms of Fort Wayne, Indiana. Unfortunately, Ken missed question #41 and that was an extremely difficult question. The question asked, "What is the current name of the game reviewed on page 12 of CGW #30?" When the game was reviewed, its name was *American Dream*, but the name was later changed to *Managing for Success*.

Third prize (a one-year complimentary subscription to CGW) goes to Steve Wadsten of Livonia, Michigan who only missed two questions.

One surprising response was in regard to question #1: "What is the score of the Dodger baseball game in issue 5.3?" The expected answer was Brooklyn Dodgers 2, New York Yankees 0. However, several readers correctly pointed out that the SSI advertisement on page 6 had the Yankees ahead by a score of 2-1. Alan Mandell suggested that the screen was difficult to read, ". . . but with the pitchers involved *[Ed: Don Newcombe is listed on the screen]*, it had to be the Dodgers leading the Yanks by a score of 2-0."

Question #4 was one of the hardest to answer. Vince DeNardo's first issue as Art Director was technically CGW 5.5. However, he was not listed as such during the next four issues (#25-29). He was listed as "Graphics Coordinator" during that period and not referred to again as "Art Director" until #30. Congratulations to those who discovered the *first* time he was listed in 5.5 and apologies to those who were tricked into thinking it was #30.

Question #9 had two correct answers. Respondents could have answered either CGW 3.3 or 3.5 as the debut of **Electronic Arts**. 3.3 mentioned the formation of the new company in Hobby and Industry News and 3.5 had a feature article on "Trip Hawkins' Dream Comes True."

We liked Robert Thurman's perceptive answer to Question #16, "What do Douglas Adams, Isaac Asimov, Jerry Pournelle, and Roger Zelazny have in common?" We were merely looking for the observation that all of these famous science-fiction authors contributed to the article on the future of computer games in CGW #45. Thurman observed a more technical relationship: "All are sci-fi writers who have had their work transferred to computers. Doug Adams co-wrote **Infocom**'s *Bureaucracy* and had his *Hitchhiker's* book turned into a game. Roger Zelazny's *Nine Princes in Amber* is a computer game. Jerry Pournelle writes computer books. Isaac Asimov was one of the first sci-fi writers to convert to word processing (It did not increase his productivity, but his editors loved his spelling checker). His *Robots of Dawn* is a computer game."

Those of us at CGW offer our sincere thanks to all of those who participated in this scavenger hunt and our congratulations to those who won prizes. We also offer our respectful congratulations to those who offered us more than we asked for.

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California Games	40	26
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Earl Weaver's Baseball	40	26
Elway Quarterback	30	20
Empire	50	33
Falcon	50	33
Flight Simulator 3.0	50	33
Gold Rush	40	26
Gunship	50	33
Hunt for Red October	50	33
Impossible Mission II	40	26
Jordan vs Bird: one on one	40	26
King's Quest I, II, III or IV	50	32
L.A. Crackdown	50	33
Leisure Suit Larry	40	26
Leisure Suit Larry II	50	33
Manhunter New York	50	32
Monopoly	40	26
Nobunaga's Ambition	60	39
Pirates	40	26
Platoon	40	26
Police Quest I or II	50	32
PT-109	50	33
Rings of Zilfin	40	26
Rocket Ranger EGA	50	33
Romance of Three Kingdoms	70	46
Sent. Worlds I: Future Magic	50	33
Shard of Spring	40	26
Sherlock	43	28
Shiloh	40	26
Silent Service	35	23
Solitaire Royale	35	23
Sons of Liberty	40	26
Space Max	60	39
Space Quest I, II or III	50	32
Star Command	50	33
Starflight	50	32
Star Saga	80	52
Strike Fleet	40	26
Test Drive	40	26
The Games: Summer Edition	50	33
The Games: Winter Edition	50	33
The Sporting News Baseball	40	26
Thexder	35	23
Three Stooges	50	33
Thud Ridge	40	26
Ultima I or III	40	26
Ultima IV or V	60	39
Under Fire	35	23
Universal Military Sim.	50	33
Visions of Aftermath	40	26
Wargame Construction Set	40	26
Warship	60	39
Wasteland	50	33
Willow	40	26
Wizard's Crown	40	26
Wizard Wars	45	29
Zak McKracken	45	29

AMIGA SOFTWARE

	LIST PRICE	WRIGHT PRICE
Barbarian	$40	$26
Bard's Tale	50	34
Clever and Smart	35	23
Defender of Crown	50	33
Earl Weaver Baseball	50	33
Final Assault	45	29
Impossible Mission II	50	33
King's Quest I, II or III	50	32
L.A. Crackdown	50	33
Lords of the Rising Sun	50	33
Marble Madness	50	33
Menace	30	20
Obliterator	40	26
Paladin	40	26
Police Quest	50	32
Questron II	50	33
Rocket Ranger	50	33
Sherlock	40	26
Solitaire Royale	30	20
Space Quest I or II	50	33
Starglider II	50	33
Terrorpods	40	26
Thexder	35	23
Three Stooges	50	33
Twilight Zone	40	26
Ultima III	40	26
Ultima IV	60	39
Universal Military Simulator	50	33
War in Middle Earth	60	39
Wizard Wars	40	26

APPLE II SOFTWARE

	LIST PRICE	WRIGHT PRICE
2400 AD	$40	$26
American Civil War 2 or 3	40	26
Bard's Tale	45	30
Bard's Tale II or III	50	32
Battles of Napoleon	50	33
Demon's Winter	30	20
Empire	50	33
King's Quest I, II, III or IV	50	32
Madden Football	50	33
Manhunter New York	50	32
Space Quest I or II	50	32
Ultima IV or V	60	39
Under Fire	60	39

C-64 SOFTWARE

	LIST PRICE	WRIGHT PRICE
4th & Inches	$30	$20
American Civil War Vol 2 or 3	40	26
Bard's Tale I, II or III	40	26
Battles of Napoleon	50	33
Demon's Winter	30	20
Impossible Mission II	40	26
Jordan vs Bird: One on One	30	20
Questron II	40	26
Red Storm Rising	40	26
Road Runner	35	23
Three Stooges	35	23
Ultima IV or V	60	39
Zak McKracken	35	23

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Circle Reader Service #52

The game ratings in CGW have become an institution in the computer entertainment hobby and industry. Many of you have told us that you use the game ratings to assist you making your game purchase decisions. The manufacturers follow this list closely as well. It is not unusual for a company to call if and ask if we have added our numbers correctly when one of their products gets a lower rating than they expected. Wild Bill Stealey, CEO of Microprose, says he values a #1 ranking in CGW's Reader Input Device above all other awards. Another publisher bought the rights to a number of older titles in order to repackage them and sell them in his economy line. He used R.I.D. in deciding which products to market. We are proud that so many of you have gotten value out of this service.

However, we think R.I.D. can be even better. One thing that can help is to insure a uniform rating scale that is easily understandable by all. We all can articulate the difference between a "1" game and a "9" game on the R.I.D. scale; but can we articulate the difference between a "6" game and a "7" game?

After studying the matter we have decided to swap our 1-9 numeric rating scale for a letter grade scale (i.e. A to F). From now on we will be ask you to rate games as if you were an educator. Assign the games a letter grade A-F. As with the world of education, the scale will translate to:

A= Excellent

B= Above Average

C= Average

D= Below Average

F= Failure

If you wish, you may assign pluses (+) or minuses (-) to your letter grade (i.e. B+, B-, C+, C-, etc.). As always, rate only those games that you have played.

Over the next three issues we will rerate all of the games on our current R.I.D. list and a number of other titles as well. Remember that thousands of gamers will be making buying decisions based on the results of these ratings, so help your fellow gamer out and let him know what is a worthy purchase and what is not.

Additionally, CGW will be working with a statistical psychologist to begin studying what are the common elements of the games you like and why different gamers like different kinds of games. To that end we will be asking you a set of demographic questions at the beginning of each R.I.D. Please be sure and answer these questions each month. We are looking forward to sharing some interesting insights from this data in the months ahead.

OK, let the testing begin!

Demographics

(List the appropriate number)

1. What is your age ?

1 = Under 14 years old
2 = 14-17 years old
3 = 18-20 years old
4 = 21-30 years old
5 = 31-35 years old
6 = 36-40 years old
7 = 41-50 years old
8 = 51+ years old

2. What machine(s) do you play games on?

(List all numbers that apply. List the machine you use most often first, the others in decending order of use).

1 = IBM, clones, Tandy
2 = Amiga
3 = Apple 8 bit
4 = Apple IIgs
5 = Atari ST
6 = Atari 8 bit
7 = C-64/128
8 = Macintosh
9 = Other (specify)

3. How much time do you typically spend playing computer games each week?

1 = Less than 2 hours
2 = 2-5 hours
3 = 6-10 hours
4 = 11-20 hours
5 = 21-30 hours
6 = 31+ hours

Games

RID #54 Questions

4. Rocket Ranger (Cinemaware)
5. Norway 1985 (SSI)
6. Wasteland (EA)
7. Red Storm Rising (Microprose)
8. Return of Werdna (SirTech)
9. Empire (Interstel)
10. Pete Rose Pennant Fever (Activision)
11. Fifth Eskadra (Simulations Canada)
12. Crusade in Europe (Microprose)
13. Jordan vs. Bird Go 1-on-1 (EA)
14. Marble Madness (EA)
15. Bard's Tale II (EA)
16. Zak McKracken (Lucasfilm)
17. Warship (SSI)
18. Russia (SSG)
19. Neuromancer (Interplay)
20. Chuck Yeager's AFT (EA)
21. Sorcerer (Infocom)
22. Voices of Aftermath (Mindscape)
23. Star Fleet I (Interstel)
24. Chickamauga (GDW)
25. Fire Brigade (Panther)
26. Airborne Ranger (Microprose)
27. Hardball! (Accolade)
28. PT-109 (Spectrum Holobyte)
29. Balance of Power (Mindscape)
30. U.M.S. (Rainbird)
31. Rommel: Battles for No. Africa (SSG)
32. Summer Games (Epyx)
33. Demon Stalkers (EA)
34. Dr. Dumont's Wild P.A.R.T.I. (First Row)
35. Earl Weaver Baseball (EA)
36. Knights of Desert (SSI)
37. Wings of Fury (Broderbund)
38. Dungeon Master (FTL)
39. Phantasie III (SSI)
40. Pool of Radiance (SSI)
41. Decision in the Desert (Microprose)
42. Battlecruiser (SSI)
43. First Expedition (Interstel)
44. Phantasie (SSI)
45. Racing Destruction Set (EA)
46. Paladin (Omnitrend)
47. Battlegroup (SSI)
48. Conflict in Vietnam (Microprose)
49. Battlehawks 1942 (Lucasfilm)
50. Wizard's Crown (SSI)
51. Choplifter (Broderbund)
52. Wizard Wars (Paragon)
53. Shiloh: Grant's Trial (SSI)
54. North Atlantic '86 (SSI)
55. Carrier Command (Rainbird)
56. Breach (Omnitrend)
57. Wishbringer (Infocom)
58. Demon's Winter (SSI)
59. Ultima V (Origin)
60. Geopolitique 1990 (Thunder Mountain)



Be it known to all gentle persons that the above named games have been well spoken of by our readers over a goodly period of time. Therefore they have been enshrined in the CGW Hall of Fame as games of renown and worthy of play by all.

Game Ratings Chart

"Empire," CGW's overall Game of the Year, continued to conquer all opposition on the Strategy list, but has found a stellar opponent in "Reach for the Stars - 3rd Edition." Both games of imperialistic space combat offer multi-player capability and ease of play. "Panzer Strike," winner of Strategy Game of the Year, improved its position to a solid 7.00 rating.

"Wasteland," Adventure Game of the Year, continued to irradiate all opposition on the Action/Adventure list. "Pirates" keelhauled "Ultima V" to take third place in this rating period and "Stealth Fighter" confused the bard's "Detect Competition" spell to overtake "Bard's Tale III" and land in fifth place.

Strategy Top 50

Name	Mfg	Machine	Tms Rtd	Avg Rsp	Rating
Empire	Intstel	Many	10	42	7.82
Reach for Stars (3rd)	SSG	Many	1	38	7.45
Earl Weaver Bsball	EA	Am,I	11	44	7.37
Strike Fleet	EA	A,C	6	41	7.10
Breach	Omtrnd	Many	8	41	7.09
Silent Service	MicPr	Many	8	99	7.06
Carrier Force	SSI	C,Ap,At	5	108	7.04
Crusade in Europe	MicPr	Many	10	58	7.03
Decision in Desert	MicPr	Many	10	35	7.03
Flight Sim II	SubLg	Many	6	84	7.03
Anc Art War Sea	Brdrbd	I	3	26	7.01
Battle of Antietam	SSI	Many	12	41	7.01
Europe Ablaze	SSG	C,Ap	9	32	7.01
NFL Challenge	XOR	I,M	7	23	7.01
Panzer Strike	SSI	Ap,C	5	27	7.00
Ancient Art of War	Brodr	I,M	10	39	6.99
Russia	SSG	Ap,C	11	32	6.98
War in So. Pac.	SSI	Ap,C	6	23	6.98
Under Fire	AH	Ap,C	8	23	6.97
Battlegroup	SSI	C,Ap	4	35	6.95
Defender Crown	MstDsg	Many	8	51	6.95
Rebel Charge	SSI	Many	9	28	6.94
Lords of Conquest	EA	Many	3	42	6.93
Field of Fire	SSI	Ap,C,At	5	67	6.92
U.S.A.A.F.	SSI	C,Ap,At	2	26	6.92
Halls Montezuma	SSG	C,Ap	4	26	6.91
Battlefront	SSG	Ap,C	8	34	6.89
Micro Lg Baseball	MicLg	Many	5	72	6.88
Star Fleet I	Intstel	Many	7	50	6.84
Shiloh: Grant's	SSI	Ap,C,I	5	26	6.83
Roadwar 2000	SSI	Many	3	34	6.80
Computer Ambush	SSI	Many	6	49	6.78
Computer Baseball	SSI	All	8	37	6.77
Gato	SpHb	Many	3	79	6.77
Gulf Strike	AH	Many	4	33	6.75
Dec. Battles ACW	SSG	A,C	2	20	6.74
Geopolitique 1990	Th.Mt.	Ap,C	3	29	6.73
3-in-1 Football	Hafner	Many	3	20	6.72
No. Atlantic '86	SSI	Ap,M	2	72	6.65
Conflict in Viet	MicPr	Many	5	21	6.63
Balance of Power	Mndscp	Many	7	46	6.61
Battlecruiser	SSI	Ap,At,C	3	29	6.61
Knights of Desert	SSI	Many	5	63	6.61
U.M.S.	Rnbrd	ST,I	3	31	6.61
Chickamauga	GDW	At,C	2	26	6.60
Paladin	Omtrnd	Am,ST	1	20	6.55
Warship	SSI	Many	4	44	6.57
Fifth Eskadra	SimCan	Many	2	20	6.53
Carriers at War	SSG	C,Ap	7	66	6.48
Norway 1985	SSI	Ap,C	4	16	6.48

Adventure/Action Top 50

Name	Mfg	Machine	Tms Rtd	Avg Rsp	Rating
Wasteland	EA	A,C	6	48	7.87
Dungeon Master	FTL	ST	7	39	7.80
Pirates	MicPr	Many	12	53	7.65
Ultima V	Origin	Ap,I	5	45	7.62
Stealth Fighter	MicPr	C	10	22	7.41
Bard's Tale III	EA	A,C	5	42	7.39
Falcon	SpHolo	I,M	7	25	7.30
Faery Tale Adv.	Micrill	Many	8	31	7.24
Bard's Tale II	EA	Many	12	55	7.13
Phantasie	SSI	Many	10	68	7.13
Three Stooges	Cnmwre	Am,C	5	29	7.11
Spellbreaker	Infcm	Many	5	24	7.09
Zork Series	Infcm	Many	7	122	7.09
Archon I	EA	Many	12	96	7.08
Legacy of Llygamyn	SirTc	Ap,I	9	52	7.08
Pinball Const. Set	EA	Many	4	47	7.08
Lode Runner	EA	Many	6	60	7.07
Phantasie II	SSI	Many	6	36	7.07
Questron	SSI	C,Ap,At	6	90	7.07
Sorcerer	Infcm	Many	5	58	7.07
Wizard's Crown	SSI	Many	11	58	7.06
Legacy Ancients	EA	Ap,C	4	46	7.05
Wings of Fury	Brdbnd	A	2	20	7.05
Shadowgate	Mindsc	Am,I	2	30	7.03
Enchanter	Infcm	Many	4	45	7.02
Police Quest	Sierra	I,M,IIGS	5	26	7.02
Eternal Dagger	SSI	Ap,At,C	3	28	7.00
One on One	EA	Many	8	75	7.00
Ultima II	Orign	Ap	8	61	7.00
Leather Goddesses	Inf	Many	2	31	6.98
Airborne Ranger	MicPr	C,I	6	24	6.97
Ultima I	Orign	Ap,C	2	48	6.96
Auto Duel	Orign	Many	2	65	6.95
Deadline	Infcm	Ap,At,I	3	44	6.94
King's Quest II	Sierra	Many	3	20	6.88
World Class Ldr Bd	Access	Am,C	4	20	6.88
Return to Atlantis	EA	Am	2	23	6.87
Hitchhiker's Guide	Infcm	Many	4	108	6.86
Planetfall	Infcm	Many	3	51	6.86
Beyond Zork	Infcm	Many	2	30	6.80
Summer Games	Epyx	Many	2	35	6.79
Wishbringer	Infcm	Many	3	36	6.79
Choplifter	Brdrbnd	Ap,C	6	70	6.78
Racing Dest Set	EA	C,At	3	49	6.78
Phantasie III	SSI	Many	2	26	6.76
Demon Stalkers	EA	C	2	20	6.76
Hardball!	Accld	Many	8	43	6.73
C. Yeager's AFT	EA	Many	2	36	6.72
Marble Madness	EA	Many	2	20	6.71
Return of Werdna	SirTc	Many	5	21	6.66

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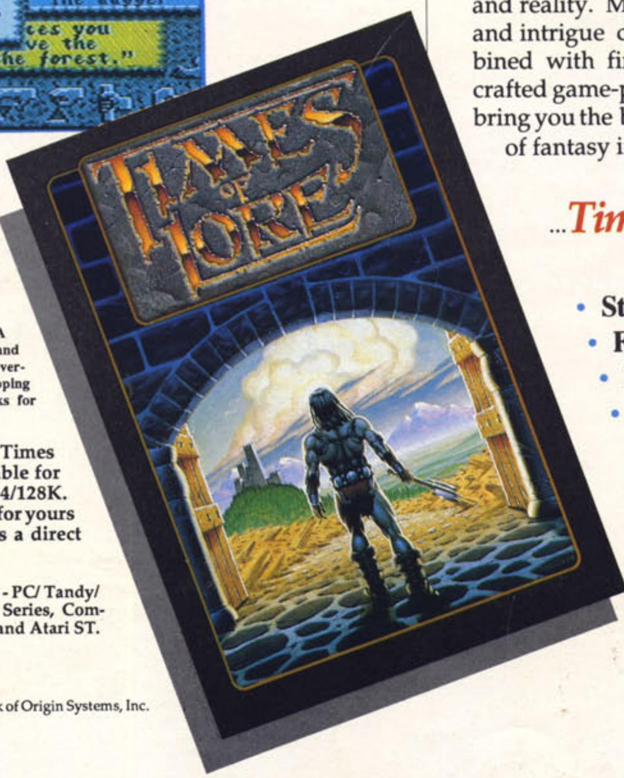
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